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ABSTRACT

The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration's (LEAA) 1974 evaluation guidelines state that each State Planning Agency (SPA) "is expected to intensively evaluate...selected projects or groups of projects according to its planning needs." Evaluations are to "incorporate sound evaluation methodologies including, as appropriate, experimental designs developed prior to project implementation, control groups, independent data collection and analysis, and indepth case studies." Intensive evaluations are required only if a use for the results is established. The SPA and its Regional Planning Units (RPUs) may determine when intensive evaluation is needed, what should be evaluated, and what methodologies to use. The handbook is designed to help SPAs and RPUs use this discretion effectively. It is aimed primarily at persons responsible for developing and managing evaluation activities. Chapter 2 identifies situations that warrant intensive evaluation and potential costs and benefits; Chapter 3 summarizes the major tasks involved. Chapters 4-8 are aimed at persons responsible for evaluation implementation, discussing the major tasks in greater detail and offering strategies. To demonstrate alternative methods of conducting intensive evaluation, appendixes describe the evaluation activities of selected SPAs and the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice's approach to evaluation. A bibliography is also appended. (Author/AJ)

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INTENSIVE EVALUATION FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLANNING AGENCIES

by

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CONTENTS

Page

FOREWORD v

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS vi

I. INTRODUCTION 1

II. ROLE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF INTENSIVE EVALUATION 3
- A. Reasons for Conducting Intensive Evaluations 3
- B. What Intensive Evaluation Involves 4

III. MAJOR TASKS CONFRONTING A MANAGER OF INTENSIVE EVALUATIONS 8

IV. TASK 1—PREPARING PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS FOR INTENSIVE EVALUATION 10
- A. The Need for Preparation 10
- B. Three Evaluability Conditions 10
  - 1. Agreement on definitions 10
  - 2. Testable statements of underlying assumptions 10
  - 3. Specified use for information on effects 11
- C. Strategies for Dealing with Evaluability Problems 11
  - 1. Evaluator participation in program planning and implementation 12
  - 2. Refusal to evaluate unevaluable programs or projects 13
  - 3. Assessing unevaluable programs or projects in order to improve evaluability in the future 13
- D. The Dangers of Ignoring Evaluability Problems 13

V. TASK 2—DEVELOPING DESIGNS FOR INTENSIVE EVALUATIONS 15
- A. Introduction 15
- B. Criteria for Selecting an Evaluation Design 15
- C. The Full Evaluation Design Process 15
- D. Strategies for Accomplishing the Evaluation Design Process 17
  - 1. Performing all steps in the detailed evaluation design process using in-house personnel 17
  - 2. Developing standard evaluation designs for common types of projects 17
  - 3. Selecting an outside evaluator on the basis of designs proposed 18
  - 4. Selecting an outside evaluator to develop a design 18
  - 5. Postponing part of the design effort 18

VI. TASK 3—EXECUTING THE EVALUATION DESIGN 19
- A. Problems in Executing an Intensive Evaluation 19
  - 1. Discrepancies between planned and actual program activities 19
  - 2. Changes in the needs of users 19
  - 3. Technical difficulties with data collection and analysis 20
- B. Dealing with Execution Problems 20
  - 1. Monitoring the progress of the evaluation effort 20
  - 2. Adapting the evaluation plan to changing conditions 20

Page

VII. TASK 4—ACHIEVING UTILIZATION OF THE EVALUATION FINDINGS 22
- A. Planned Uses 22
- B. Techniques for Increasing Utilization 22

VIII. TASK 5—MANAGING RESOURCES FOR INTENSIVE EVALUATION ACTIVITIES 23
- A. Funding 23
- B. Staffing for Evaluation 23
- C. Interaction with the Existing Management Structure 25
- D. Improving Intensive Evaluations Through Feedback on Results .. 26

APPENDIX A: ALTERNATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR CONDUCTING INTENSIVE EVALUATION .. 29
- I. Minnesota 31
- II. Pennsylvania 36
- III. Massachusetts 40
- IV. Virginia 43
- V. Evaluation in States with Small Sized Grants 47
- VI. Examples of Data Systems Used for Evaluation Purposes 50

APPENDIX B: THE NATIONAL EVALUATION PROGRAM 53

BIBLIOGRAPHY 59

5

FOREWORD

The demand for this handbook has been unusually high. It was originally intended to assist State Planning Agencies and large Regional Planning Unit staffs with planning and setting priorities for evaluation. But the volume of requests received from cities and counties and rural RPUs indicates that the report's usefulness is more far-reaching.

Evaluation is not easy, particularly for people new to the field. We believe this handbook can be very helpful to criminal justice planners and managers at many levels.

GERALD M. CAPLAN
Director

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This report would not have been possible without the full cooperation of personnel in the National and Regional Offices of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) and State Planning Agencies (SPAs). The full list of LEAA and SPA staff that personally provided information and support to this effort is too long to detail here. However, special recognition should be given to the staffs of the Massachusetts, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Virginia SPAs for their extensive time and effort in providing information for this document and in reviewing drafts. The authors would also like to acknowledge the support of John Greacen, formerly Deputy Director of the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, members of the Institute's Office of Evaluation, and the LEAA advisory group established for this study.

In addition to the assistance from LEAA, technical review and advice were provided by Joe Nay and Richard Schmidt of The Urban Institute.

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

The evaluation guidelines adopted by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) in 1974 state that each State Planning Agency (SPA) "is expected to intensively evaluate . . . selected projects or groups of projects according to its planning needs."[1] Such evaluations are to "incorporate sound evaluation methodologies including, as appropriate, experimental designs developed prior to project implementations, control groups, independent data collection and analysis, and in-depth case studies."

The guidelines require intensive evaluations only if a use for the results is established. The SPA and its Regional Planning Units[2] (RPUs) have the discretion to determine when intensive evaluation is needed, what should be evaluated and what methodologies can be used.

This handbook is designed to help SPAs and RPUs use this discretion effectively. It complements an earlier publication, "Monitoring for Criminal Justice Planning Agencies,"[3] which addressed the other component of LEAA evaluation requirements—that SPAs monitor all funded projects. Monitoring compares a funded project's plans with what actually happened. Intensive evaluation, on the other hand, attempts to verify that what happened was the *result* of a planned program activity.

The material presented here is aimed primarily at persons responsible for developing and managing an agency's evaluation activities. This audience includes both in-house evaluators and agency policy and management decision makers. In most states this group includes the SPA Executive Director, program planners and the evaluation director or coordinator. Much of the presentation is in terms of and is directed towards SPAs. but the material is also applicable to RPUs and other state and local criminal justice agencies conducting evaluation or planning programs.

This handbook is based on the recent experience of criminal justice planning agencies and other state, local and federal agencies. Evaluation activities of SPAs have been reviewed through telephone surveys, site visits and examination of written materials on procedures, methodologies, uses and products. Site visits included meetings with selected RPU personnel and subgrantees.[4]

Most criminal justice planning agencies have found it difficult or even impossible to conduct intensive evaluations. Two questions have been especially troublesome:

- When should intensive evaluations be conducted?
- How should they be conducted?

The following chapters are aimed at helping state planning agencies resolve those questions. Chapter II addresses the first and Chapters III through VIII the second.

More specifically, Chapter II identifies situations that warrant intensive evaluation and the potential costs and benefits of intensive evaluation for an SPA. Chapter III summarizes the major tasks involved in intensive evaluations:

- Preparing programs and projects for evaluation,
- Developing evaluation designs,
- Executing the designs,
- Insuring use of the evaluation results, and
- Managing resources for intensive evaluation activities.

Chapters IV through VIII are aimed more at those persons responsible for implementing an evaluation policy and discusses each of the above major tasks in greater detail. The discussions identify what each task involves, the need for performing it, and strategies for accomplishing it.

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[1] *LEAA Guideline Manual*, M4100.1C CHG 1, U.S. Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, November 1, 1974.

[2] A *Regional Planning Unit* (RPU) is a representative body of a unit or combination of units of local government which provides SPAs with information on local criminal justice system needs and, to support this activity, receives federal funds from SPAs. An RPU may also be given additional responsibilities, such as developing or reviewing local subgrant applications, managing subgrants, or monitoring projects.

[3] *Monitoring for Criminal Justice Planning Agencies*, U.S. Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, August 1, 1974.

[4] A *subgrantee* receives federal funds from the SPA (the grantee of LEAA) to carry out a criminal justice project. It can be a unit of local or state government or a nongovernmental group.

To demonstrate alternative ways of conducting intensive evaluation, Appendix A describes the evaluation activities of selected SPAs. Appendix B describes an approach to evaluation used by the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice. A bibliography lists publications that address many issues raised here.

CHAPTER II. ROLE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF INTENSIVE EVALUATION

Intensive evaluation, unlike monitoring, is not required on all projects. LEAA expects only that an SPA "intensively evaluate . . . selected projects or groups of projects according to its planning needs."[1] SPAs are expected to incorporate "sound evaluation methodologies" but are not required to use a specific one. Thus, within these general guidelines, the SPA is responsible for determining the specific role and character of intensive evaluation in its state.

This chapter attempts to assist the SPA in exercising that responsibility by answering the questions: Why conduct intensive evaluations? What should be included in intensive evaluations?

A. Reasons for Conducting Intensive Evaluations.

A variety of reasons are typically put forth to justify evaluation activities: there is an administrative requirement for evaluation, or evaluations will rationalize decision processes, or simply "others do it." Such justifications frequently evaporate under critical review. More often evaluations are done primarily because someone is willing to do them.

To avoid such bureaucratic rationalizations, the LEAA Evaluation Policy Task Force viewed evaluation as having the same goals as action programs—improving the criminal justice system and reducing crime and delinquency.[2] The Task Force then concluded that intensive evaluations are justified when the resulting information can have a significant impact on criminal justice operations and, in turn, on crime and delinquency. That is, intensive evaluation is desirable when the potential payoff from obtaining the information outweighs the cost of obtaining it or of continuing operations without it.

Based on SPAs' experiences, intensive evaluation may be warranted if:

- *A substantial amount of resources is at stake.* SPAs and other agencies frequently must decide whether to allocate sizeable amounts of resources one way or another. For example, many states are facing the problem of whether to spend large amounts on new, centralized correctional institutions or adopt decentralized, community-based correctional facilities. Several SPAs (among them Maine and Massachusetts) are evaluating community-based corrections projects to determine, before irreversible decisions are made, how such a shift is likely to affect correctional effectiveness and costs.
- *Existing criminal justice policies or operational procedures are being questioned or challenged.* As alternative program strategies become available, criminal justice agencies are faced with the problem of selection. Frequently, the decision is based on legal requirements, administrative pressures, political demands, or the need to improve operations, rather than on the relative merits of the strategies.

  For example, the use of women on police patrol forces has led to several evaluations. The Police Foundation supported one in Washington, D.C., which not only helped with local manpower decisions but also had legal implications for police departments throughout the country.

  The Georgia SPA has devoted the bulk of its evaluation efforts to intensive evaluation of correctional projects, with the purpose of establishing state correctional policies and operating guidelines.

  Similarly, the Pennsylvania Parole Board compared the effectiveness of a regional parole office with that of two community parole centers for two years to determine whether to further decentralize parole activities.

  In Massachusetts, serious internal disorder in a minimum security prison was attributed to a certain category of prisoners and changes in processing procedures were recommended. However, an evaluation showed that the recommended changes would be ineffective and that alternative changes would be more effective.

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[1] *LEAA Guideline Manual*, p. 1.

[2] *The Report of the LEAA Evaluation Policy Task Force*, U.S. Government Printing Office, March 1, 1974.

- *SPAs are being asked to renew funding for projects of unknown quality.*

  In most states, the majority of yearly grant award decisions favor ongoing projects over new proposals, despite a lack of evidence that the former have had, or will have, their promised effect. Thus, partially because of a lack of evaluation, many SPAs have obligated significant portions of their funds over several years for programs that may be having little or no effect. Many SPAs, such as Maryland, have concentrated their evaluation on projects expected to request refunding. In Minnesota, such evaluations have frequently led to the addition of special conditions aimed at improving project effectiveness.

- *Other state and local allocation decisions are likely to be affected.*

  In many states, SPA funding and evaluation can influence whether a project also receives funds from other local and state agencies. The cumulative effect of SPA evaluation can thus be significant. For example, evidence that a police patrol technique or burglary prevention project was effective in one community frequently has led other communities to adopt it. Similarly, the Minnesota SPA has curtailed a trend toward police school liaison officer programs by demonstrating, through evaluation, the limited effect of previously funded programs.

As the examples demonstrate, intensive evaluation can be applied to planning and decision making by both SPA personnel and state and local agencies. It can involve programs funded by LEAA or those operated entirely with local and state funds.

However, not all situations involving uncertainty warrant intensive evaluations. In some cases, evaluation is not feasible because of constraints in project designs, methodology, or resources. In other cases, the cost of resolving an issue would outweigh any benefit, or the issue may be resolved by using other sources of information. Sometimes information on results may be less important than other types of information—such as whether services are delivered equitably or whether activities are accomplished efficiently.

However, information relating a project activity to its effects can be very influential in many cases. For example, a police department is unlikely to continue an expensive campaign to educate the public about protecting their residences against burglaries if the campaign has had little effect on homeowners' actions. In such situations, intensive evaluation is essential—because establishing a link between activities and results with an acceptable degree of confidence normally requires more information than monitoring or other types of analysis can provide.

Exactly when the SPA should attempt intensive evaluation is left to its discretion. However, the evaluation guidelines require that the information be available to all planners and decision makers who influence the operation of programs and projects, not just to SPA staff members. In addition, the SPA is required to detail the sources of its evaluation data. Though in many new programs there is no previous experience against which to estimate outcomes, LEAA expects the SPAs to provide such information as the program develops.

In summary, SPAs should consider conducting intensive evaluation when the degree of uncertainty over the expected outcome of alternative courses of action is unacceptable and when information on causal relationships can significantly influence a decision.

B. What Intensive Evaluation Involves

Conclusively determining the effects of specific activities in a dynamic social environment is at best difficult and frequently is not feasible with available resources. Intensive evaluation must not only document the activity and changes in its environment, but also show that changes result from the activity and not from other factors in the environment.

Many evaluation studies fail to link program activities and results, or definitively describe what actually occurred after funds were expended. In practice, evaluations of LEAA-supported projects have ranged from subjective summary judgments on whether funds were expended legally to a limited number of well-documented experiments. The adjective "intensive" has been added in the LEAA evaluation guidelines to emphasize that the evaluation should involve rigorous data collection and analysis procedures to distinguish it from monitoring, subjective assessments, and other types of project review that have also been referred to as "evaluation." In general, the information produced from intensive evaluation should be sufficient to permit planners to develop estimates of future project outcomes with known and documented levels of confidence.

The documentation of project activities should include enough detail that a person wishing to apply the evaluation results can know whether he is actually employing the activities which were evaluated. For example, information that a burglary prevention project reduced burglaries is of little value to a criminal justice planner if he cannot tell others what specific activities were involved. Even such a simple burglary prevention idea as "Project Identification"[a] can be implemented in many different ways.

The collection of information for intensive evaluation can be difficult. It frequently is not available; or it is obtainable only through costly special procedures; or the information gathering process itself changes the operation of a project. For example, in evaluating a police patrol procedure, the evaluator must expend extra effort to verify that the procedure is followed. Several current evaluations have demonstrated that patrol assignment information can be misleading since assignments are not always followed; one evaluation found that half the service calls were answered by a car other than the one assigned. Spot checks were necessary to verify whether assignments were followed. But such close scrutiny can interfere with the performance of those being observed and produce misleading results.

Documenting changes in the political and social environment often is even more difficult. For instance, measuring changes in citizen opinions of police services can require expensive surveys. Frequently a project may have so little impact compared to other forces at work that measurement of its effects is impossible. In addition, all measurement devices introduce their own uncertainty, and frequently the uncertainty can exceed the maximum possible effect of a small crime prevention project.

The crucial difference between intensive evaluation and monitoring is verification that the project produced a specific result. Various methodologies can be used to provide evidence linking activities and results. The costs of each vary, and each produces different information and different levels of confidence.

Four common evaluation methodologies are illustrated in Figure 1, using a program aimed at reducing burglaries. The measure used to determine program results in the illustrations is the burglary rate. The four methodologies can be characterized as:

1. *Before versus after program comparison*
   In this case, the burglary rate prior to program implementation is compared with the rate during and after operation of the program. The assumed program effect is the change in rates between the two periods. In attributing the change to the program, it is assumed that other events have not affected the rate. If other factors have remained constant and the rate does not fluctuate through time, use of the change in rate may be valid.
2. *Comparison of projected values with actual measurements*
   As a refinement to the before/after methodology, this comparison uses an analysis of pre-program trends to project what the burglary rate would have been if the program had not been implemented. The difference in projected values and actual values is the presumed program result. By using a projection based on recent experiences, the methodology attempts to factor out short-term variations and account for the effect of events other than the program.
3. *Comparison with populations not served by by the program*
   A common methodogy is to compare, in terms of some common measure, the condition of those served by the program to that of those not served, and to *attribute* any differences to the program. If the served and not served are selected at random from a common population, then the inference may be valid. However, the program itself may introduce a selection bias that is reflected in the evaluation comparisons. For example, a comparison of the burglary rate among citizens participating in a property marking program with the rate of nonparticipants may be misleading, for the participating group may already have characteristics associated with low burglary rates. If randomization is not possible, various techniques to reduce the biases can sometimes be used.
4. *Time series comparison between those served and not served by a program*
   This approach is a combination of the above cases using either before and after program data or developing projections for both the served and non-served population. As with the

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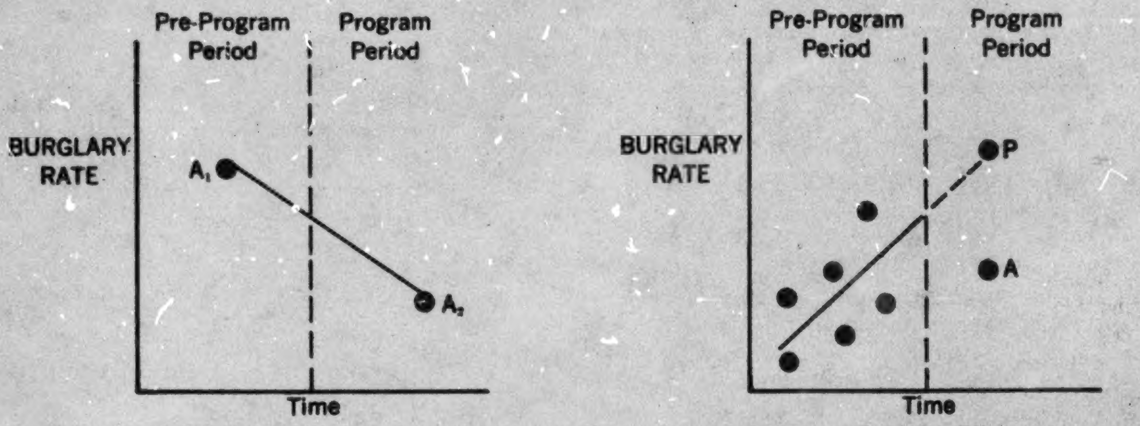
[a] Project Identification is a program in which citizens mark their property with a unique number and publicize the fact to potential burglars. Variation occurs in the identification numbers used, the techniques used to get citizen participation, the techniques used to publicize participation, and the use made of the numbers by police departments.



DESIGN 1

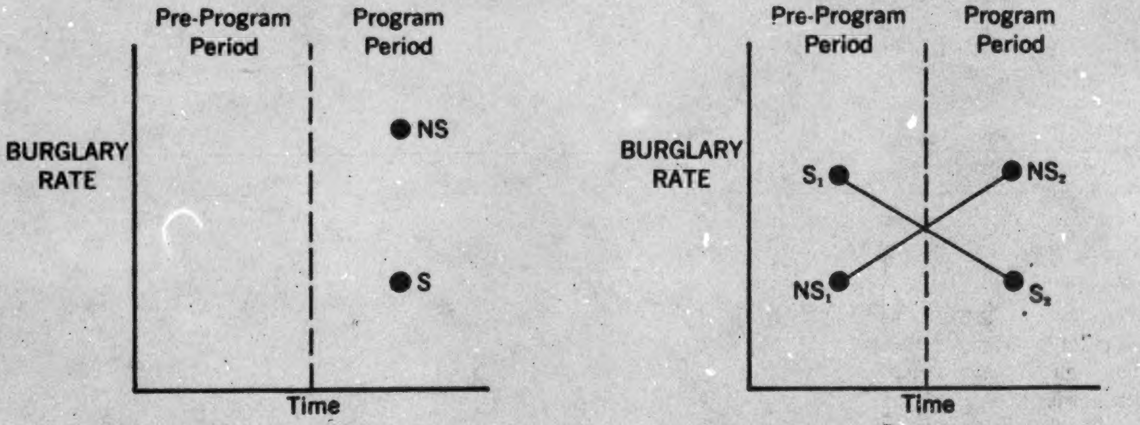
Before vs. After Program Comparison

Estimated Program Effect = After Program Rate (A_2) − Before Program Rate (A_1)

DESIGN 2

Time Trend Projection of Pre-Program vs. Actual Program Data

Estimated Program Effect = Actual Rate (A) − Projected Rate (P)



DESIGN 3

One Time Comparison Between Those Served and Not Served by Program

Program Effect = Rate of Those Served (S) − Rate of Those Not Served (NS)

DESIGN 4

Time Series Comparisons Between Those Served and Not Served

Program Effect = Difference in Before and After Burglary Rates of Population Served by the Program (S_2–S_1) – Similar Difference for Those Not Served (NS_2–NS_1)

FIGURE 1: *Evaluation Design Methodologies*

previous case, selection criteria for participation in the program could bias the evaluation without randomization or other control procedures.

The order of these methodologies corresponds roughly to their reliability and their cost. The first is the least reliable and least costly; the fourth is the most reliable and most costly. Examples of the use of these and other methodologies and further discussion of numerous technical issues are contained in *Practical Program Evaluation for State and Local Government Officials*, by Harry P. Hatry, et al.[4] Additional references are listed in the bibliography.

In summary, intensive evaluation can be highly useful to an SPA but it is often expensive[5] and difficult. In general, LEAA expects that most SPAs will find some intensive evaluation worthwhile and an effective tool in improving the criminal justice system when linked to planning activities.

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[4] *Practical Program Evaluation for State and Local Government Officials*, Harry P. Hatry, Richard E. Winnie, and Donald M. Fisk, The Urban Institute, Washington, D.C., 1973.

[5] It is hard to give typical figures, since costs vary widely. If all needed data are readily accessible, an intensive evaluation can sometimes be performed with a few days of staff time. On the other hand, a careful evaluation of a demonstration program can cost more than the program itself. As one example, the previously mentioned District of Columbia study of policewomen on patrol, comparing the performance of 86 female with 86 male patrol officers over a year, cost about $300,000.

14

CHAPTER III. MAJOR TASKS CONFRONTING A MANAGER OF INTENSIVE EVALUATIONS

The rest of this manual focuses on the problems of planning and executing intensive evaluations within a state or local criminal justice agency. This chapter briefly describes five major tasks that are peculiar to the management of intensive evaluation activities. Succeeding chapters discuss them in more detail and present strategies for accomplishing them.

Throughout this manual, the term "manager of intensive evaluations" refers to an agency staff person responsible for conducting intensive evaluations. The person could be the head of the Evaluation Unit for a State Planning Agency, for example. The term does not necessarily include supervisors of particular evaluation efforts, who may be lower level staff persons or contractor employees.

Task 1—Preparing Programs and Projects for Intensive Evaluation

Intensive evaluation involves collecting precise items of information, under carefully defined conditions, at various points in time. The findings must have known levels of accuracy and be directly applicable to pending decisions.

Although these facts are generally understood, few projects or programs are already defined and managed in such a way that a useful intensive evaluation can be performed. It is usually necessary to prepare programs or projects for evaluation—sometimes by developing precise definitions, statements of underlying assumptions, and enforceable standard operating procedures; sometimes by asking program managers and policy makers to modify the program or establish controls.

Chapter IV describes three conditions which a program or project must meet before it is suitable for evaluation. It also presents strategies for handling programs not suitable for evaluation.

Task 2—Developing Designs for Intensive Evaluations

Several kinds of intensive evaluation are usually possible. Comparison data can be sought, data can be collected at various points in time, different analytical models can be applied, and so forth. Alternate designs will produce different items of information, with different levels of confidence, and will require different resources. Generally speaking, it costs more and takes more time to produce more and better information. As noted previously, developing the design for an intensive evaluation effort requires considering the costs of different evaluation possibilities, the availability of resources, the time required for different activities, the ways in which program managers will use information, and the benefits which can be expected from making use of different types of information.

Chapter V discusses criteria for selecting an evaluation design and describes a number of strategies for developing designs.

Task 3—Executing the Evaluation Design

No matter how carefully an evaluation plan has been developed, difficulties will be encountered, such as:

- Program activities will not be conducted precisely as expected.
- Comparison groups may change in character.
- Necessary data will often not be available when planned.
- The information needs of the intended users will change.

Managing an intensive evaluation effort, therefore, requires more than seeing that events take place according to schedule. It requires keeping track of a myriad of occurrences and adapting the evaluation plan as needed. What makes the task particularly difficult is that the harm done by changing conditions is often not noticeable until after the evaluation is completed—and sometimes not even then.

Chapter VI describes these problems in more detail and discusses how to handle them.

Task 4—Achieving Utilization of the Evaluation Findings

Throughout all levels of government, the most frequent complaint about evaluation efforts is that they are useless. Program managers and policy makers say evaluation reports often are little help in solving problems; evaluators complain that decision makers ignore applicable evaluation findings. Chapter VII argues that most utilization problems can be traced to faulty planning and execution of the evaluation efforts and outlines techniques for increasing the utilization of sound evaluations. Of particular concern is the timely production of information since most SPA and RPU planning decisions follow a cyclic pattern, focusing on yearly funding questions.

Task 5—Managing Resources for Intensive Evaluation Activities

Carrying out a program of intensive evaluation requires assembling, allocating, and directing the use of resources in a specific organizational context. Chapter VIII discusses the ways different SPAs have dealt with the problems of managing evaluation activities—funding, staffing, and interacting with other SPA management processes.

CHAPTER IV. TASK 1—PREPARING PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS FOR INTENSIVE EVALUATION

A. The Need for Preparation

In the typical program, activities proceed in unplanned and unrecorded ways, objectives are ambiguous, the dimensions of the problem are unknown, outside factors are only hazily understood, standards for comparison are missing, and so forth. Not surprisingly, attempts to evaluate such programs are frequently inconclusive.

Consequently, it is usually necessary to further define a program or project if the evaluation is to succeed. The extent of such preparation will vary, but all programs should include certain essential characteristics before evaluation is attempted. Three such conditions—and strategies for meeting them—are presented in this chapter.

B. Three Evaluability Conditions

Even before design of an evaluation begins, a program or project must satisfy three conditions. If it does not, the evaluation is likely to run into severe difficulties. The conditions are:

- Those who will use the evaluation results must agree on definitions of the program's or project's activities, the conditions it is supposed to change, and the kinds of outcomes expected.
- The key assumptions on which the program is based must be stated in forms which can be tested objectively.
- Program or project managers must spell out at least one clearly defined use for evaluation information in making a decision or in initiating administrative action.

It should be noted, however, that these are necessary but not sufficient conditions; a program or project may satisfy all three, but desired information on its effects still may not be obtainable.

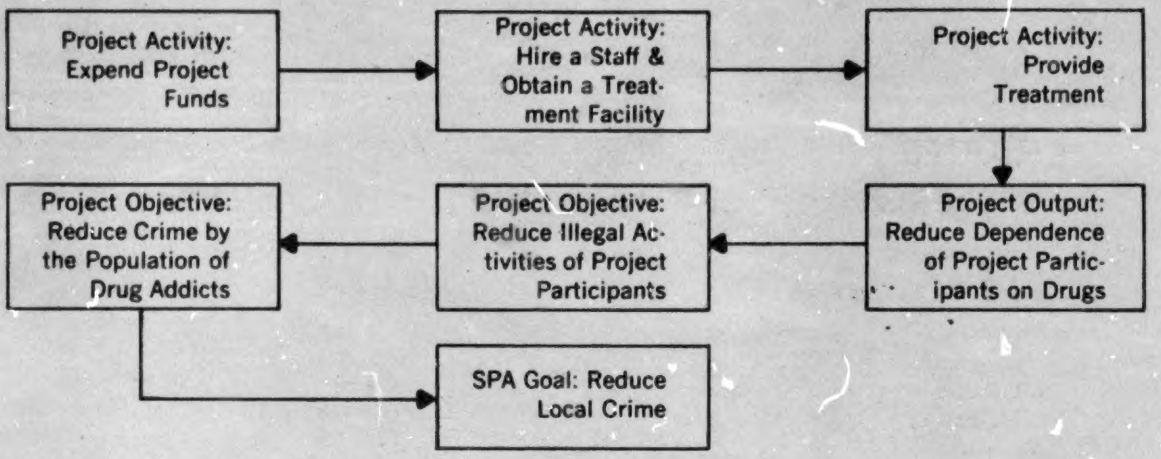
The meaning of each evaluability condition will be discussed now in more detail, together with the problems which evaluation managers will encounter if the conditions are not met.

1. *Agreement on definitions.* Programs and projects often are described in generalities. For example, there may be a project to "provide counseling and other supportive services to potentially delinquent youths." The project staff members, the local community, and the monitors of state and federal funds nearly always have different ideas of what constitutes "counseling", "supportive services", and "potentially delinquent youths." Before an intensive evaluation begins, one needs a dependable way of telling potential delinquents from other youths, of recognizing whether the delinquent youths are being counseled, and of measuring the kind and extent of supportive services provided. Moreover, it is necessary to measure the characteristics of the delinquent youths that the project is supposed to change. Otherwise, the findings will not be useful.

For example, the Pennsylvania SPA has, at times, asked outside evaluators to propose evaluation designs based on very general descriptions of projects or programs. Frequently, the evaluator later discovered that the project operated quite differently from the way it was described. As a result, many evaluators have had to change their design drastically and some have even withdrawn.

2. *Testable statements of underlying assumptions.* The second problem—that assumptions underlying the program often cannot be tested—is closely related to the first but is not as easily recognized.

This situation impedes intensive evaluation, as illustrated in the following diagram:


Project Activity: Expend Project Funds
Project Activity: Hire a Staff & Obtain a Treatment Facility
Project Activity: Provide Treatment
Project Output: Reduce Dependence of Project Participants on Drugs
Project Objective: Reduce Illegal Activities of Project Participants
Project Objective: Reduce Crime by the Population of Drug Addicts
SPA Goal: Reduce Local Crime

This simplified diagram depicts a drug treatment project. The series of events (boxes) and the assumptions that one will result in the next (arrows) represent the logic of the project. One can monitor the project by seeing whether the expected events occur and by measuring levels of achievement, but this information is not enough to say whether each event caused the next, as assumed. That is the task of intensive evaluation.

Often, however, those desiring evaluation information do not spell out their assumptions, or they phrase them in a form that cannot be tested objectively. The evaluators must then try to phrase hypotheses to be tested, and the evaluation's usefulness will depend upon how well they can read the decision makers' minds.

Even when key assumptions are carefully stated and all relevant events can be measured, it still may not be possible to test the assumptions. Without comparative data on similar situations which did not have such a project, or other dependable means of predicting with confidence what would have happened without the project, there often is no way to tell whether the project actually produced the results observed.

3. *Specified use for information on effects.* The third problem is a lack of a pre-determined, clearly defined use for the findings. If a use cannot be specified, then the value of the evaluation effort will depend upon luck. For example, someone may happen to read a report at the time he is trying to solve a problem to which the evaluation findings can somehow be applied.

This is not to say, however, that a single specific use will serve throughout the evaluation effort. On the contrary, the needs of potential users change constantly, and the eventual use of the findings must be reconsidered at every step. In fact, specifying uses is important to accomplishing each of the evaluator's five major tasks.

In performing the first task—preparing for intensive evaluation—being able to specify a use will test how well the program or project, as currently structured, relates to real planning needs. Quite often, one cannot find any manager, planner, or policy maker who could or would not act differently even if he had better information on program effects.

For example, the Virginia SPA for a while contracted for a number of assessments of completed projects. These reports were rarely used, because in practice the Commission provided initial support to any reasonable project proposed by a locality, regardless of whether a similar project had been effective elsewhere. Thus the SPA realistically had little use for information on the results of *completed* local projects.[1]

C. Strategies for Dealing with Evaluability Problems

If a program or project does not meet the three conditions for evaluability, the solution rests with policy makers and program managers. An evaluator does not normally have the authority to define a program's activities and goals, to choose its underlying assumptions, or to decree how it will relate to future actions.

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[1] The SPA staff subsequently increased the usefulness of its project assessments by concentrating on projects due for refunding, rather than on completed projects.

Managers of intensive evaluation can use three basic strategies to encourage program officials to make their programs and projects evaluable:

- Have evaluators work with program officials during initial program planning and implementation,
- Refuse to evaluate unevaluable programs or projects, and
- Perform an assessment of the unevaluable program or project, pointing out the questions which the evaluation attempt could not answer, in hopes of improving future evaluation efforts.

Each of these is described in detail below.

1. *Evaluator participation in program planning and implementation.* This approach is designed to avoid evaluability problems by having an evaluation specialist participate in the planning and initial implementation of programs and projects. An evaluator can: (1) point out inconsistencies or lack of precision in defining activities and objectives, (2) suggest measures or explain why various factors cannot be measured, (3) look for logical gaps in the tacit assumptions that guide the planning, and (4) remind managers of long-term information needs.

This type of interaction can be valuable whether or not an intensive evaluation of the program or project is carried out. Any program or project should profit from participation by an evaluation specialist during the early planning and implementation stages. In fact, it is questionable if an activity can be managed to achieve objectives if it does not satisfy the evaluability criteria. That is, there need to be objective measures of activities and changes in the social problem area of interest, testable hypotheses connecting activities with intended results, and clearly defined actions which can be taken in response to information on results achieved.

This strategy is particularly useful in evaluating a single local project. Such evaluations are often difficult because external factors spread throughout a whole locality may make comparisons difficult, and because often there are too few cases to obtain statistically significant findings. The COMSEC (neighborhood team policing) experiment in Cincinnati and the use of women as patrol officers in the District of Columbia [2] included close participation by evaluators from the projects' beginnings, and the evaluations have yielded valid and useful results. By contrast, the Utah SPA [3] recently found it impossible to evaluate the effects of a project which added a special investigator to a college security department, although the project had been operating for three years. The stated project objectives referred to the whole department rather than to the special investigator, project activities could not be distinguished from other department activities, and most objectives were stated ambiguously or could not be measured from the records kept. If an evaluation specialist had been involved in the initial planning, these problems could have been anticipated. He could have pressed for more relevant statements of objectives, better records, and perhaps a different definition of the special investigator's role.

A few SPAs have found ways to incorporate evaluability considerations into initial planning. In Minnesota, an SPA evaluator is on the review team for each application for initial funding. These review teams frequently require changes in a project design to make it evaluable.

In Pennsylvania, where state criminal justice planning is highly decentralized, the SPA's central evaluation staff selects an evaluation consultant during the subgrant approval process. The evaluator is thus immediately available to assist the subgrantee in project implementation. (For some projects, major design and planning decisions are made prior to and during the application process, prohibiting an evaluator's participation since he is paid out of subgrant funds. The Pennsylvania SPA feels that a way should be found to pay for the participation of the evaluator in design and planning prior to subgrant award.)

The most extreme application of this first strategy would be to require projects or programs to demonstrate evaluability as a prerequisite for funding. No SPA appears to follow this approach at present, although the Regional Planning Council in Alameda County, Calif., comes close. In Oklahoma and North Carolina, the SPA's evaluation unit must approve projects before they can be funded; these units concentrate only on ensuring monitoring, but their procedures probably could be applied to ensuring intensive evaluation.

This strategy, however applied, has been especially effective, but it has two drawbacks: (1) it may require more funds or evaluation specialists than are available, and (2) officials developing new programs and projects may be unwilling to work closely with an evaluator or unable to work with the individuals assigned. Thus, an agency may be forced to adopt one of the other two strategies, or perhaps a combined strategy in which evaluators participate in the initial stages of some projects but not others.

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[2] Clarren, Sumner N. and Alfred I. Schwartz. *An Evaluation of Cincinnati's Team Policing Program*, Working Paper 3006-11, Washington, D.C., The Urban Institute, October 8, 1974; and Bloch, Peter B. and Deborah Anderson, *Policewomen on Patrol: Final Report*, Washington, D.C., Police Foundation, September 1974.

[3] Report to the Utah Law Enforcement Planning Council Review and Analysis Committee, August 30, 1974.

2. *Refusal to evaluate unevaluable programs or projects.* Under this strategy, the manager of intensive evaluations would assess whether programs or projects suggested by policy makers as subjects for evaluation meet the three evaluability conditions; and he would then refuse to devote further resources to evaluating any that failed to do so.

Since, as noted earlier, few existing programs or projects meet all three evaluability criteria, this strategy should include some mechanism for bringing about a redesign[1] of unevaluable programs. This process may consist simply of the natural pressure on a program manager to satisfy his superiors by contributing the intensive evaluation information they desire, or there may be a formal process requiring the program manager to present a new, evaluable design, possibly as a condition for further funding. Or the intensive evaluation manager himself could arrange for financial support and technical assistance to help program managers develop an evaluable design.

The National Institute of Mental Health is an agency which has used all three redesign mechanisms just mentioned. The National Evaluation Program of LEAA (see Appendix B) is following a form of this strategy; the "Phase I" evaluations include an assessment of the evaluability of existing programs, and a "Phase II" intensive evaluation is not attempted unless programs are evaluable.

The principal drawback to this strategy probably is that intensive evaluation managers rarely have authority simply to refuse to proceed on an evaluation effort requested by higher officials. Still, the evaluation manager can sometimes use his influence to bring about the same result. In Massachusetts, SPA planners and the director of evaluation meet annually to decide which of the year's programs and projects will be evaluated, and the evaluation director can thus argue against inclusion of those that are unevaluable. Later, as the SPA's evaluation unit develops the detailed evaluation design, the director of evaluation can discuss specific problems with the SPA planners and state and local officials before proceeding and help them to redesign the program.

3. *Assessing unevaluable programs or projects in order to improve evaluability in the future.* Many SPAs and state and local criminal justice agencies proceed with evaluation efforts even when they realize that the programs do not meet the evaluability conditions. They justify this procedure on a number of grounds, such as the belief that the evaluation attempt itself will improve management, or the hope that some worthwhile information may be produced. Such justifications may be highly relevant in certain situations, so long as it is recognized that they may not produce useful intensive evaluation information.

Furthermore, it is possible that proceeding with assessments of unevaluable programs may contribute to the development of intensive evaluation capabilities in the future. Evaluators in a number of SPAs report that SPA policy makers and state and local officials often do not understand evaluation and thus are uninterested in making programs evaluable. Some evaluation managers have tried to increase appreciation for evaluative activities by performing whatever assessments they can—usually no more than summary observations based on site visits and a few interviews—and pointing out what questions cannot be answered and why; the evaluation managers in the Utah and Vermont SPAs are among many which have taken this approach. Another possibility is to perform an occasional intensive evaluation of a program which meets the first two evaluability conditions but not the third (a definable use for the results), in order to demonstrate what types of studies are possible.

D. The Dangers of Ignoring Evaluability Problems

In concluding this chapter, it should be noted that some SPAs and other agencies do not consciously consider evaluability at all, but instead begin immediately on the second major task—attempting to design intensive evaluation efforts. A correctly developed design will uncover many evaluability problems. But there are several dangers to this procedure. One is that the evaluation designer may unconsciously impose his own notions of definitions, key assumptions, and intended uses of the evaluation information, which may be quite different from those that actually guide program operations. Second, a considerable amount of time, manpower, and resources may be expended on an evaluation design effort before the basic unevaluability is realized. Third, if a need for program redesign is discovered after an evaluation effort has started, there is often a tendency to press on with the evaluation attempt even if the program's evaluability problems are not resolved. Consequently, it would appear wiser to attack evaluability problems directly, by strategies such as those described in this chapter.

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[1] Any steps taken to meet the evaluability criteria will be called a *redesign* of the program. Such steps may range from developing precise definitions of key terms to actual modification of program activities.

CHAPTER V. TASK 2—DEVELOPING DESIGNS FOR INTENSIVE EVALUATIONS

A. Introduction

After it has been satisfactorily determined that a program or project is evaluable, the evaluation design is developed. It should specify four elements:

- Data to be collected.
- Procedures for collecting and handling data.
- Analytical procedures for drawing conclusions from the data.
- Procedures for summarizing, reporting, and using the findings.

In Chapter II, four general designs were listed:

- Before vs. after program comparison.
- Time trend projection of pre-program vs. actual program data.
- One time comparison between those served and not served by program.
- Time series comparison between those served and not served.

Many variations on these designs are possible, however, and each possibility involves different information, different levels of accuracy and confidence, and different costs.

This chapter discusses criteria for selecting a design and outlines the steps to be performed in developing a design from scratch to satisfy the criteria completely. It then discusses five practical strategies for obtaining suitable evaluation designs.

B. Criteria for Selecting an Evaluation Design

Selection of an evaluation design is guided by essentially the same criteria used for deciding whether intensive evaluation is desired at all: the benefits from having the information compared to the costs of obtaining it. However, in selecting a design, benefits and costs need to be estimated more exactly.

In estimating benefits, the evaluation designer must analyze how decisions are made and enforced, what information is used, what changes might be made in program operations, whether program managers and policy makers have the authority and will to make such changes, and what improvements in program accomplishments might result.

Estimating costs similarly requires a detailed look at program activities to determine how difficult it will be to collect desired data, how accurate the collected data will be, who will collect and analyze the data, and how much interference with normal program operations will result.

When the feasible evaluation options are spelled out, with careful estimates of both benefits and costs, a design can be chosen by policy makers. The best option may not be the one offering the highest ratio of benefits to costs. Typically, decision makers will first select the information they wish to obtain, then modify their choice according to the amount of resources they wish to devote to evaluation. Whatever their judgment, the manager of intensive evaluations must present clearly defined evaluation options, describing potential benefits and costs, so that policy makers can make their selection quickly and easily.

C. The Full Evaluation Design Process

Estimating the benefits and costs of possible evaluation designs can be a very detailed and difficult process. The skills of a professional evaluation specialist will prove very helpful, but they are not essential. All items in the detailed outline below can be estimated with a fair degree of confidence by anyone familiar with the management and operations of the program or project. Moreover, even if skilled analysts are available, some steps require managerial judgment rather than analytical expertise. In any case, the manager of intensive evaluations must oversee the whole evaluation design process, whatever his analytical training.

(The following outline does not indicate computational or analytical techniques to be used. Criminal justice programs, management systems and social problems vary too widely to include all useful techniques. However, the bibliography at the end of this manual includes many references to material on techniques.)

As mentioned previously, the actual selection of an evaluation design is the responsibility of policy-making officials. The design process outlined here attempts to crystalize all the important decision factors, so that the policy decision can be made easily and accurately. The policy decision itself is made at the end of "design step 4."

The evaluation design process[1] has five major steps:

Design Step 1: Analysis of the Decision-making System

This step provides the criteria for deciding how much and what types of information to seek in the evaluation. At a minimum, the following factors should be specified:

- The users of the information to be obtained,
- The transfer mechanisms for disseminating information to the users,
- The amount, type, and detail of data that the users will need for action,
- The criteria to be used to estimate benefits,
- The criteria to be used to estimate the level of confidence of the information to be produced, and
- The levels of confidence the users would require before acting upon the information.

Design Step 2: Analysis of the Program's Operations

This step provides the framework for measurement and comparison of program operations. It must specify the following:

- A characterization of the program and its environment, in terms of measurable factors;
- The instruments required to measure program objectives, program activities, and costs;
- The data sources for each measure;
- The assumptions relating intended program activities to the program's goals;
- The expected impact that would result from testing each assumption underlying the program;
- The type of measurements and comparisons feasible, under current or anticipated program organization, to use in testing each underlying assumption;
- The cost of obtaining data from each source; and
- The quality of data from each source.

Design Step 3: Development of Possible Evaluation Designs

This step develops alternative evaluation designs. For *each* hypothesis (program assumption) which may be tested, the following factors must be specified:

- The measurements required,
- The data sources for those measurements,
- The comparisons to be made,
- The analytical techniques for making the comparisons,
- The level of confidence provided by the design,
- The cost of conducting the necessary work, and
- The type and volume of findings that the design can be expected to produce.

Design Step 4: Estimation of Benefits and Costs of the Designs and Selection of the Design to be Implemented

This step estimates the costs and benefits of each candidate design by comparing the estimates developed in Step 3 with the criteria developed in Step 1. For each design, the following factors must be determined:

- The total cost in funds and staff,
- The cost of dissemination and utilization,
- The total benefits if the design were to be implemented, and
- A rough schedule for executing the design.

Once these factors are determined, the options can be presented to policy officials so that *they can readily understand them and select the design* best suited to their value judgments.

Normally, this selection can be made without completing the fifth step—preparation of a schedule for conducting the evaluation. Even so, a rough schedule must be estimated for each design, since it is important to know whether the evaluation can be timed to mesh with program operations and decision needs. After the selection is made, the final design step is completed:

Design Step 5: Scheduling the Work

This step establishes the operational plan for implementing the selected design. Factors to be specified are:

- The schedule for data collection and processing,
- The schedule for analysis, and
- The planned process for dissemination and utilization of results.

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[1] The rationale for this outline and further details on the meanings of the various steps are in the working paper, *Urban Institute Plan for the Design of an Evaluation*, by John D. Waller and John W. Scanlon, March 1973 (unpublished).

D. Strategies for Accomplishing the Evaluation Design Process

This section presents five strategies for obtaining suitable evaluation designs (meeting the criteria presented earlier in this chapter). If evaluation resources were unlimited, the ideal strategy would be the first one listed—in which the manager of intensive evaluations proceeds systematically through each detailed step, using in-house personnel and resources. But it is rarely used because designing every intensive evaluation from scratch is a lengthy and expensive process.

The other four strategies have been used by SPAs and other criminal justice agencies with varying degrees of success. Each can save time and resources over the full in-house approach, but it does so at the risk of ignoring or inadequately treating important steps. The alternate strategies may result in designs that do not produce the desired information within existing constraints of time and resources, designs that produce less information than could have been obtained at the same cost, or designs that cost more to execute than is necessary. Because compromises are sometimes necessary, the evaluation manager may accept such risks in order to increase the potential productivity of his resources.

The evaluation design strategies described here are:

- Performing all steps with in-house personnel,
- Developing standard evaluation designs for common types of projects,
- Selecting an outside evaluator on the basis of designs proposed,
- Selecting an outside evaluator to develop a design, and
- Postponing part of the design effort.

1. *Performing all steps in the detailed evaluation design process using in-house personnel.* Accomplishing most steps in the full evaluation design process requires extensive knowledge of the internal workings of the agency desiring the evaluation, including its management and policy-setting processes, as well as those of the program or project being evaluated. In-house staff are normally much more likely to have this knowledge than outside consultants or contractors. Moreover, when the process is conducted in-house, the evaluation manager can keep close contact with each step in development of the design.

Many SPAs and other criminal justice agencies do not have a large enough in-house staff to design evaluations, even if they wished to. Others do not have the technical expertise required. Moreover, even if it were possible to use this approach at all times, the benefits of doing so may not justify the cost. For example, after a few designs have been developed in detail from scratch, the evaluation manager will begin to know which items need most attention, which cause little difficulty, which can be safely left to a consultant or contractor, and so forth, so that little would be gained from working through the corresponding design steps each time. Thus, in the long term, the most practical evaluation design system will be likely to use the full in-house approach for the most important and novel efforts and one of the other strategies for other evaluation efforts.

2. *Developing standard evaluation designs for common types of projects.* This strategy is relevant when there are enough similar projects that a common evaluation design might be used. The idea would be to build up a library of standard designs to be applied automatically to projects of a particular type.

The Minnesota SPA has followed such a strategy for some time. It has tended to select projects for evaluation that promise to use a design that could be applied to many other existing and future projects. Minnesota's rationale is twofold: first, to improve the quality of the evaluations by obtaining comparable information from multiple projects and, second, to achieve economies by using one design process for a number of evaluations.

The California SPA has occasionally experimented with evaluating clusters of similar projects. Completed evaluations of separate projects were searched for design features that could apply to the cluster; in the process, findings from the various evaluations were collected and compared where possible.

The biggest risk in using the standardized design strategy is that, despite apparent similarities between two projects, the proper evaluation design for one may be wrong for the other. There may be important differences in operations, in the costs of obtaining data, and in the decision-making operating environments. The degree of similarity between projects is not well enough established to use the same design until the full design process has been applied to both. Nevertheless, a design that has worked for an apparently similar project would seem a reasonable one to try, and no doubt is more likely to be useful than than one selected by chance or intuition.

Another possible risk is that a pre-determined *evaluation* design may force conformity in *project* *design*. Thus, the projects' activities and objectives may be decided by an arbitrary evaluation design, rather than by local needs and project logic.

3. *Selecting an outside evaluator on the basis of designs proposed*. This strategy is common in SPAs and many other agencies. A "request for proposals" is issued, specifying in general terms what the agency wants from the evaluation. Bidders (or grant applicants or potential consultants, depending upon the administrative procedures used) respond with proposals that include a suggested evaluation design. The evaluation of the Virginia High Incidence Target program (described in Appendix A) was designed in this way.

Problems with this approach arise because outsiders do not have sufficient access to program operations and to policy decision processes to perform the required evaluation design steps. Moreover, those within the agency who will choose from among the proposed designs do not have adequate criteria for selection if they have not performed the indicated analyses. Thus, evaluation designs tend to be selected according to general impressions, such as "reasonableness", or irrelevant factors, such as the ability or administrative competence of the proposer to conduct the evaluation (as opposed to the logic or suitability of the *design*).

4. *Selecting an outside evaluator to develop a design*. Under this strategy, an outside contractor or consultant is selected just to design the intensive evaluation. The designer may also conduct the evaluation effort later, or another contractor may be selected.

This strategy is used frequently, with widely varying degrees of success. The evaluation of the team policing experiment in Cincinnati, mentioned earlier, used a contractor to develop the evaluation design and to work closely with the police department in setting up the experiment.

The advantage of this strategy over the one mentioned above, in which a contractor is selected on the basis of a proposed design, is that the contractor here usually has better access to key policy makers and can investigate actual program operations more thoroughly. The contract provides both resources and an official charter for the outside evaluator to seek the necessary information and cooperation.

The risk is that, despite the contract, program managers and policy makers may not provide the needed information and guidance. When an outside contractor or consultant is hired for a specific product, there is a tendency to feel that he should be able to produce it with little assistance, that extensive participation by staff members or state and local officials would mean they are "doing the job" for which the contractor or consultant is being paid.

5. *Postponing part of the design effort*. It is sometimes decided to proceed with some aspects of an intensive evaluation effort before the design is fully specified. For example, the collection and storage of data may be started before it is determined how the data will be analyzed. In other cases, both data collection and analysis are performed before the dissemination and use of the findings are thought out.

In some situations, this may be a valid strategy. Quite often, government agencies will implement part of a program or project before the remaining activities and objectives have been determined. To evaluate such a program, it may be necessary to guess what pre-implementation data will be needed and collect them, with the idea that some data will be better than none. Prescribing standard data for all projects of a given type, as in Connecticut and South Carolina, is a way of institutionalizing this line of reasoning.

Another possible reason for delay is that putting off some parts of the full design selection analysis may make them easier to perform. If, for example, an agency is undergoing an extensive policy review, the number of potential future users of intensive evaluation information will be large, and a large number of options will have to be considered. But if this part of the analysis can be postponed for a short time, top officials may announce policy decisions which will make the analysis of future uses much easier because fewer options need to be considered.

Nevertheless, this strategy should be avoided if possible. The risk is high that one will proceed with an intensive evaluation that is not feasible or is irrelevant. Moreover, once the proper evaluation design is finally developed, considerable amounts of time and resources usually have been wasted on collecting useless data or on unrelated activities.

CHAPTER VI. TASK 3—EXECUTING THE EVALUATION DESIGN

Projects and programs typically are not implemented as proposed, evaluation data are frequently not available as planned, and users of evaluation information and their information needs often change during the life of an evaluation. These conditions combine to hinder the implementation of evaluations as designed and affect the usefulness of the information produced. In some cases, the problems and root causes are under the control of the evaluator, but frequently they are not.

This chapter identifies major problems in executing evaluations and discusses two steps for dealing with them.

A. Problems in Executing an Intensive Evaluation

Three types of problems are distinguished: discrepancies between planned and actual program activities, changes in the needs of users, and technical difficulties with data collection and analysis.

1. *Discrepancies between planned and actual program activities.* In executing evaluation designs, the evaluator frequently discovers that the project or program is not being operated as expected. Situations encountered include:

a. *Schedules are not followed.* This not only may delay completion of the evaluation beyond critical deadlines, but also may affect the quality of the results if the analysis is dependent on comparisons with other events that are on schedule. For example, the validity of comparing two burglary prevention techniques is questionable if they operate at different times of the year, since there are seasonal variations in burglary rates.

b. *Planned project activities do not occur.* If the evaluation is designed to test the effect of specific criminal justice activities, then it is essential that those activities be carried out as planned. Frequently, evaluators concentrate on output and presume that the input went as planned. The latter is rarely true. For example, evaluations of the effect of various police patrol procedures often find that actual police practices deviate considerably from the procedures to be tested.

c. *Project focus is lost by taking on new tasks.* Many projects expand their efforts beyond what was planned, with the result that less effort is devoted to the project's original objectives. Such dilution of effort can make it impossible to evaluate the project's effects in any one direction. For instance, it is not uncommon for pretrial diversion projects, designed to serve first offenders, to be expanded to include all offenders. In one case where this happened, the number of first offenders treated was so much smaller than planned that there were not enough cases to allow a valid evaluation of the project.

d. *Purity of comparison activities is not maintained.* Evaluation of the effects of a project frequently depends upon comparison with a similar group of people or geographical area not served by the project. However, it is often very difficult to ensure that the services to be evaluated are withheld from the comparison group. For example, if a new police technique or treatment procedure being tried out in an experimental area appears to be working, there is a tendency for it to be adopted elsewhere in the city and in other cities.

2. *Changes in the needs of users.* Intensive evaluations typically extend over several months, and often over one or more years. During these periods, personnel and organizations change frequently. Information needs change as management focuses on different issues or as various issues change significance. For example, evaluation of a city's drug prevention project may have a high

priority when the evaluation is started, but changing economic conditions can increase local concern over burglary and reduce interest in other issues, so that the drug project evaluation's importance diminishes.

3. *Technical difficulties with data collection and analysis.* Conducting an evaluation depends on collecting and analyzing data. Frequently, procedures for accomplishing these activities simply are not implemented as planned. For example, project personnel may fail to collect the data as promised, or needed computer routines may not be available as planned.

More often, some data are obtained, but not enough to support the proposed analysis. For example, the Indiana SPA recently designed a data collection and analysis process for evaluating funded projects. On the basis of trial runs on fifty projects, it was determined that the data actually collected could not be used in the proposed analysis, and this system was subsequently abandoned.

In most evaluation efforts, some unforeseen technical problems will be experienced despite careful planning.

B. Dealing with Execution Problems

Managers of intensive evaluations have developed a variety of techniques to deal with the problems just described. Such techniques often are developed to fit particular circumstances, including individual personalities. Even so, all effective techniques are composed of two major parts: monitoring the progress of the evaluation effort and adapting the evaluation plan to changing conditions.

1. *Monitoring the progress of the evaluation effort.* An intensive evaluation relates three different complex sets of activities and interests:

- The data collection, analysis, and reporting that constitute the evaluation effort itself;
- The operations of the program or project, the conditions under which it operates, and the social problem areas it is concerned with; and
- The planning, policy, and management activities and needs that the evaluation information is expected to affect.

These factors are likely to change somewhat every day, sometimes dramatically, more often gradually. If any of them change significantly, in unexpected ways, then the evaluation design may become infeasible, inappropriate, or irrelevant. Therefore, regular monitoring of these factors should be included as part of the evaluation plan. This activity often requires extensive and time consuming interaction between the evaluation manager and the project, and the SPA should be prepared to allocate adequate resources for it.

In addition, the monitoring must be coordinated with the evaluation effort. Some sample strategies for tying these two together are:

- If a contractor or consultant is performing the evaluation, the evaluation manager can see that these evaluators communicate regularly with the staff monitors of the projects. Massachusetts does this by scheduling meetings between evaluators and SPA program area specialists.
- In some cases, the evaluator may take over most of the monitoring responsibilities for the projects concerned. Virginia followed this approach in its High Incidence Target evaluation by requiring the contractor to provide a monthly monitoring report on each of the nine projects in the program.
- In Minnesota, where evaluations are performed by in-house personnel, the evaluators often take over many of the staff monitoring functions for the projects being evaluated.

2. *Adapting the evaluation plan to changing conditions.* If an evaluation manager detects through monitoring a change that endangers the evaluation effort, then corrective action is needed. It may consist of changing the evaluation design, but other options also should be considered. If the program or project operations have been altered, the best corrective may be to return them to their intended form, or perhaps to introduce some control mechanisms to keep them there. For example, evaluators of innovative scheduling procedures in a county court system may find there has been a gradual shift to different procedures. The chief judge or court administrator may wish to enforce a return to the defined procedures, so that a valid comparison can be made between them and the old procedures before other innovations are introduced.

Some program managers and policy makers would rather enforce program operations than alter the evalution design and risk losing information they need. Others, however, choose to let program operations evolve naturally and ask the evalutors to salvage whatever information they can.

As in any situation that offers options, the evaluation manager must reassess the situation, estimate the costs and benefits of the options, and see that the decisionmakers—such as those who could enforce additional controls on program operations—are presented with options as quickly as possible.

Four general ways of adapting to changes that threaten an intensive evaluation are:

- *The evaluator provides additional technical assistance to program operating personnel.*
  This approach is useful only in overcoming minor difficulties. If the changes involve major components of the projects, the evaluator usually cannot have a strong impact without, in effect, becoming a part of the project's management. In such a case, his objectivity becomes suspect; or, at the least, his interaction is in itself a deviation from the project design. For these reasons, several SPAs have established procedures to maintain the evaluator's independence—such as limiting his responsibility to collecting and analyzing data and reporting results.
- *The evaluator requests action by project managers or sponsors.*
  By reporting deviations, assessing the impact and recommending solutions, the evaluator can sometimes affect project operations.
- *The evaluation design is altered.*
  In some cases, the evaluation design can be altered to accommodate the change in project operations, such as by specifying a new method for obtaining data or a new procedure for testing a hypothesis.
- *The evaluation is terminated.*
  Evaluators and SPAs can terminate planned evaluations when conditions have changed so much that useful information is not likely to be obtained. This route is not followed as often as it should be, judging from many evaluation reports that are inconclusive because of changed conditions.

CHAPTER VII. TASK 4—ACHIEVING UTILIZATION OF THE EVALUATION FINDINGS

A. Planned Uses

As noted in Chapter III, the most frequent complaint about evaluations is that they are not useful. Program managers and policy makers complain that evaluations produce big reports that are little help in solving problems, while evaluators complain that decision makers ignore the results produced.

This manual has stressed the importance of considering the eventual uses of the evaluation information. Every task—from deciding whether intensive evaluation is desirable, through evaluability assessment, evaluation design, and execution of the design—should be guided by the specific uses and users of the information.

B. Techniques for Increasing Utilization

In addition to focusing on the uses and users in designing and carrying out evaluations, specific measures can be adopted to bring evaluation results to the attention of decision makers. These include:

- *Timing of reports.* The timing of a report is often critical to its use. It must reach decision makers long enough before a decision is to be made that they have time to read and absorb it. But if it appears too early, such as a year or two before a budget decision is made, it may be forgotten or at least discounted because its information is not recent. A number of SPAs claim that the use of evaluation reports is much higher if the results are made available at key times of planning cycles. For instance, Massachusetts found that reports from evaluations in which the field work was performed during the summer often appeared a little too late for the September planning cycle; utilization increased markedly when planners began receiving oral preliminary reports in late summer or early September.
- *Personal interaction between evaluators and potential users.* Occasionally, evaluators or evaluation managers maintain a close and frequent relationship with higher level decision makers. An evaluation manager might attend, as technical advisor, all meetings at which planning and policy decisions are discussed and bring up any evaluation findings which bear on the point being considered.

  This method has many variations. In Pennsylvania, contract evaluators attend Regional Planning Council and Commission hearings when the projects they have evaluated are being considered for refunding. In Minnesota, every grant review team includes a member of the in-house evaluation unit. In the Cincinnati and Rochester neighborhood team policing evaluations, the head of the evaluation team has met frequently with the chief or head of the department's planning unit, reporting preliminary results which related to pending decisions.
- *Making evaluation results readable and accessible.* Since intensive evaluation reports necessarily tend to be lengthy and technical, decision makers frequently ignore them or cannot comprehend them. For this reason, SPAs have required that summaries be prepared on all evaluation reports and that briefings be given to identified users. In some cases, the public media are used to disseminate results; for example, the Police Foundation frequently publicizes evaluation results on criminal justice programs. Several SPAs publish newsletters containing summaries of evaluation findings.

CHAPTER VIII. TASK 5—MANAGING RESOURCES FOR INTENSIVE EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Many problems raised by SPAs concerning intensive evaluations are actually questions of organization and management. This chapter considers three problems mentioned most frequently by SPAs—the funding of evaluation activities, staffing, and the interaction of evaluators with other SPA staff members—and presents strategies to deal with them. It closes by suggesting that intensive evaluation itself can be improved by regular feedback on results.

(The chapter focuses on problems of SPA evaluation managers only; the diverse problems affecting managers in the thousands of criminal justice agencies and local governments throughout the country are impossible to address in one presentation.)

A. Funding

Intensive evaluations are expensive and often must compete for resources previously committed to action grants or planning activities. The problem is compounded by restrictive funding categories established by Federal regulations and state policies, by existing obligations of most SPA funds to independent subgrants, and by the requirements for matching funds.

There are three principal approaches to funding evaluation in the SPAs:

- *Use Part B (planning) funds.*[1] The bulk of the Part B allocation is used up by other requirements, but many states use Part B funds for salaries of one or two staff specialists in evaluation.
- *Give an action grant for evaluation.* An SPA can give an action grant to itself, or to a closely associated state office, for evaluation purposes. The necessary matching funds are normally provided by the state legislature. (In one instance in Massachusetts, part of the match was provided by a university which was performing two major evaluations.) In a few cases, however, the legislature has refused to provide the match, or the Commission has refused to approve the grant application. SPAs whose usual policy is to fund projects for only a limited number of years, but who wish to use this strategy to pay for evaluation, must make an exception to that policy, find other funds to support evaluation, or perform evaluations only sporadically.
- *Set aside a portion of funds for evaluation within individual projects.* This strategy can take several forms. Pennsylvania funds its evaluations by having the project designate 3 to 5 percent of the grant award for contracting with an independent evaluator. North Dakota adds a small amount for evaluation to a grant award; sometimes, in fact, similar projects which expect to profit from the evaluation findings will help provide the matching funds.

These options, with some advantages and disadvantages of each, are summarized in Table VIII-1.

B. Staffing for Evaluation

There are three considerations in deciding what in-house staff an SPA needs for evaluation:

- What sort and how many evaluations will be conducted,
- How the evaluation activities can be funded, and
- What parts of the evaluation effort will be done in-house and what parts will be performed by outside contractors or consultants.

The first consideration indicates what skills must be brought to bear and what level of effort is required, the second places constraints on the manpower that can be assembled, while the third determines how available manpower is employed. The first of these issues was discussed in Chapter II, and the second appeared earlier in this chapter; there is no need to discuss them further here. The third consideration is explored in this section.

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[1] The Safe Streets Act provides funds to the states for various specified purposes. Part B of the Act provides funds to support planning activities.

There are a great many variations possible in dividing effort among in-house and outside personnel. The experiences of SPAs and LEAA indicate that these can be classified into five general staffing models:

a. *Evaluations designed and executed by the SPA staff*. Minnesota has a realtively large in-house evaluation staff which designs and executes all intensive evaluations supported by the SPA. The state has a moderately sized population and receives a moderate LEAA block grant. Smaller states may not be able to support a sufficiently large and professional staff to function in this way, and larger states might find the job too large and unmanageable.

TABLE VIII–1. *Evaluation Funding Strategies for SPAs*

SOURCE OF FUNDS	EXAMPLES	REPORTED ADVANTAGES	REPORTED DISADVANTAGES OR PROBLEMS
Part B planning funds only	Utah	Unit becomes an integral part of SPA and increases management capability	Competition for limited funds
Action grant for in-house evaluation capability	Minnesota	Provides better quality control	Continuation funding beyond a state's normal limits Restrictions on funding in-house staff
Action grant to SPA, with funds used to hire consultants or contractors for a number of evaluations	Massachusetts	Increases resources controlled by in-house staff Quick response to new evaluation needs	Continuation funding beyond a state's normal limits Restrictions on use of action grant funds
Action grants for individual evaluation	Massachusetts' award to Harvard University Virginia High Incidence Target Program evaluation	Is easy to administer Concentration of funds is feasible	SPA may lose control over the evaluation Difficult to obtain matching funds
Portion of individual subgrant	Pennsylvania's independent project evaluation system Most states have tried it	Reduces funding difficulties	Evaluation funds often too limited to resolve attribution questions Cluster and program evaluation difficult to arrange Subgrantee evaluation capabilities often limited
Portion of individual subgrant, with matching funds from subgrantees having similar projects	North Dakota	Increases the scope of the evaluation	Projects sometimes cannot be included in the same design

b. *Contract out the design and execution of all intensive evaluations*. In this model, the contractor for the evaluation is selected partly on the basis of his proposed design. The evaluation of the High Incidence Target Program in Virginia, described in Appendix A, is an example of the approach. States with very few intensive evaluation efforts typically have followed this strategy. As their experience with and need for intensive evaluation grows, SPAs tend to exert greater control over the designs, either by making their requests for proposals more specific or by doing more evaluation design in-house.

c. *Designs prepared by in-house staff but execution performed by consultants or contractors*. This combined model is followed in Massachusetts, which has a two-person staff to evaluate a number of large programs. Despite a relatively large block grant, Massachusetts has a small number of projects compared with most states. Moreover, the Massachusetts SPA has a strongly centralized management system, so that the primary decision makers are represented by the SPA planners, a few state agency officials, and seven local authorities. These two facts probably make it possible for a small staff to design all the needed evaluations and to administer their execution.

d. *Designs performed by or under the direction of regional or local jurisdictions, but evaluations executed by SPA-approved contractors or consultants.* In the Pennsylvania SPA's decentralized management system, both the design and execution of intensive evaluation efforts must be performed near the primary decision makers, who are at the regional and local level. To exert quality control and to help obtain evaluation findings suitable for cross-regional uses, the SPA evaluation staff prepares a list of potential evaluators which the regional or local officials may use for contracting out intensive evaluations. The SPA central staff has also specified formats used for contracting with evaluators and on occasion reviews evaluation plans.

e. *The "Phase I/Phase II" approach.* This model is not known to be used in any SPA at present, but is being used by the LEAA National Evaluation Program. (See Appendix B). In this approach, "Phase I evaluations," which combine the evaluability assessment with the evaluation design, are performed by contractors for a large number of programs. The in-house staff then decides which programs should be selected for a "Phase II" intensive evaluation, devotes its design efforts to modifying the designs for those programs and projects, and executes the evaluations either in-house or under contract. This model has much to recommend it, since a Phase I evaluation typically produces a considerable amount of evaluative information at relatively low cost and in a relatively short period of time. This information is frequently all that is needed by decision makers, and more expensive intensive evaluations can thus be avoided.

The evaluation manager cannot select a staffing model merely to suit his personal preferences. The requirement that intensive evaluation activities closely match program activities and decision makers' needs suggests that, for a given SPA, no more than one or two of the staffing models would be appropriate. Appendix A describes the evaluation management in four SPAs, representing the first four general staffing models given above. Each description also discusses procedures and policies used in other SPA planning and management activities and shows how the model fits in with them.

Few SPAs have had a significant evaluation program in operation for a number of years, and consequently there is not sufficient evidence yet available to know what staffing patterns work best under what circumstances. As a general rule, however, SPAs find the best results occur when the designer and conductor of intensive evaluations interact frequently with the ultimate users of the evaluation findings.

C. Interaction with the Existing Management Structure

In many cases, there is little or no integration of evaluation activities into an SPA's overall management activities. Too often the evaluator operates in relative isolation from policy makers, planners, project monitors, and project directors.

Procedures adopted by various SPAs to integrate evaluators include:

- *Evaluators participate in the grant review process.* In several states evaluation unit staff members review all grant applications to determine if the grant is evaluable. In Minnesota, grant review is conducted on a team basis and an evaluator is a member of each team. In North Carolina, the evaluation unit reviews each grant and can request that funding be withheld until the proposals are modified to satisfy established criteria.

  In some states, however, the evaluators review only those grants containing an evaluation component and restrict their attention to the evaluation. Under these conditions the evaluators have fewer opportunities to affect project design or use their knowledge from previous evaluations of similar projects.
- *Evaluators design or control project monitoring.* Frequently project monitoring is separated administratively from evaluation and little or no exchange of information occurs between the two functions. Several SPAs have eliminated this gap by either giving the monitoring function to the evaluators or having the evaluators design a new monitoring system to insure that their information needs are met.
- *Evaluators operate a comprehensive data col-*

lection system. In several states evaluators are responsible for developing a comprehensive data system for planning purposes, for supporting evaluation related activities—such as project rating, monitoring, and policy analysis—and for conducting intensive evaluation. By designing, controlling, and utilizing these data systems, the evaluators establish continuing contact with projects, decision makers, and planners concerning information availability and needs.

- *Evaluators assume multiple responsibilities.* Many SPAs feel they do not have the resources or the need to designate even one person as responsible for intensive evaluation on a full-time basis. In these cases, responsibility is exercised by one or more staff members also having responsibility for each activities as planning or grants management. In addition, some states, which could centralize the responsibility, nevertheless try as a matter of policy to make evaluation activities part of the routine management of the SPA. In Texas, for example, each program planner is responsible for initiating and overseeing evaluation of his own projects.

The assignment of responsibility for evaluation and the manner in which the evaluators interact with other SPA activities depends greatly on the SPA's management style, on the type of funding used, and on the type of staff hired. But whatever the structure, effective use of evaluation results requires that the evaluator interact with the SPA staff to interpret their information needs and obtain their assistance.

D. Improving Intensive Evaluations Through Feedback on Results

This final section discusses a problem that deserves more attention than it receives—that managers of intensive evaluations too often do not practice what they preach.

As discussed earlier in this manual, and clearly intended by the LEAA guidelines on evaluation, any program for achieving specific results needs to determine regularly how well it is doing so. Objective and accurate monitoring of activities and results is necessary to manage such programs, and intensive evaluation information on their true impact is occasionally required for better managing and planning. These observations apply equally well to the SPA's evaluation activities themselves. To do an effective job, the manager of intensive evaluations needs systematic monitoring of evaluation activities and the results they have achieved, and occasionally can profit, from an intensive evaluation of his own efforts.

The principles for evaluating an evaluation program are the same as for any program. For monitoring, one needs agreed upon measures, objectives, procedures for collecting feedback information, and procedures for modifying actions (in this case, the SPA evaluation actiivties) based upon the information obtained. For intensive evaluation, one needs to determine the basic definitions and assumptions on which the evaluation program operates, the uses for feedback information, and an appropriate evaluation design, and then see that the evaluation is properly conducted and used.

A limited form of monitoring to improve evaluation activities occurs in some states, such as Pennsylvania, which maintain a list of approved potential evaluators. In cases of poor performance, the evaluators may be removed from the list or a notation may be recorded on it.

Evaluating an intensive evaluation program should probably begin by measuring the degree to which administrative decisions or actions have been guided by the evaluation findings. This requires a way of predicting what the decisions would have been without the evaluation information. Two possible approaches are:

- A regular survey of intended users of evaluation information can be performed. Questions would deal with use of evaluation information, with some indication of what administrative actions would have been taken without the evaluation information. The questions should also explore why some evaluation findings are not used more extensively and what additional information might be useful.
- An alternate approach is to keep track of the history of the findings from particular evaluation efforts. The primary administrative actions or policy decisions intended to be guided by the findings can be checked to see what courses were followed. Decision makers can be interviewed to see how the evaluation findings affected their choices, as well as to identify factors which helped or inhibited use of the findings.

An evaluation program, however, cannot be content merely with affecting decisions and administrative processes. It should also result in *better* decisions—that is, the criminal justice system should be improved by the use of evaluation information. Consequently, an evaluation manager should consider performing, at some point, an intensive evaluation of some of his evaluation activities, to see which types contribute most to improving the criminal justice system and to better estimate the kind and level of future evaluations needed. It is unlikely that such an evaluation would be feasible for any SPA at present, but it may become possible for some within a few years. At any rate, it would appear worthwhile to ask how evaluation may be contributing to the criminal justice system's effectiveness, even if the question cannot be completely answered.

APPENDIX A

Alternative Organizational Strategies for Conducting Intensive Evaluation

ALTERNATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR CONDUCTING INTENSIVE EVALUATION

SPAs have adopted a variety of organizational strategies for conducting evaluations. There is variation in who provides funding, who does the evaluations, who uses the evaluation information, and who determines what will be evaluated.

Most variation results from the fact that each SPA has its own organizational arrangement and management style for administering the Safe Streets Act and spending LEAA funds. Some states use a decentralized planning process in which the Regional Planning Units (RPUs) make most decisions, while in other states the central SPA staff has the greatest impact.

Different SPAs also have different strategies for improving the criminal justice system. Some use their LEAA money primarily to augment regular state programs and to resolve problems that otherwise might not be attacked. Other states use their LEAA funds as "seed money" to demonstrate techniques and motivate local and state agencies to adopt or drop selected projects.

Due to such variations, it is not possible to specify an approach to evaluation appropriate for all SPAs. The activities of several states are presented here only to indicate possible approaches and to demonstrate various evaluation procedures mentioned previously. This appendix describes intensive evaluation efforts in Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Virginia. They represent fairly distinct approaches to evaluation which, in general, have been tested through experience.

The Minnesota SPA provides an example of designing and implementing evaluations with an in-house staff. At the other extreme, Pennsylvania designs and conducts evaluations on a project-by-project basis using contractors and consultants. Massachusetts uses a mixture of these two approaches; the SPA staff actively participates in the evaluation design process but consultants perform the evaluations. Virginia's ad hoc approach to intensive evaluation is common to states that have a small or moderate LEAA grant and few large evaluations. Virginia also has developed an interesting system for obtaining project assessments by outside consultants.

Each state's evaluation system is described in the context of the SPA's management; its processes for planning, funding, and refunding of projects; the planned and actual uses of evaluation; how the system was developed; where it is now; and problems and future plans.

In addition to the four major examples, this appendix describes how a few states have tied their evaluation to a comprehensive data system and how some states receiving relatively small grants have handled intensive evaluation.

The reader must keep in mind that SPA approaches to evaluation are constantly changing due to a combination of many factors: changing LEAA requirements, the SPAs' own information needs and —perhaps most important of all—changes in personnel. Each of the SPAs described here is also constantly changing, and in particular, all are trying to solve the problems that are indicated.

I. MINNESOTA

Minnesota has a population of 3,804,971[1] of which 51.2 percent is located in the St.Paul/Minneapolis metropolitan area. The LEAA block grant to the state for FY 1974 was over $9 million. With these funds, the Governor's Commission on Crime Prevention and Control awarded nearly 158 grants, 56 percent of which were continuation grants.

The Minnesota SPA is organized through the Governor's Commission on Crime Prevention and Control. Commission members and an executive director are appointed by the Governor. The state level staff has close to 50 professionals, organized into six sections: Planning and Program Development, Grants Administration, Operations Management and Research, Fiscal, Audit, and Project Evaluation. Seven Regional Advisory Councils perform the Regional Planning Unit (RPU) functions. Within the St. Paul/Minneapolis metropolitan region there are also two city/county coordinating councils. Each advisory council has a staff of at least two who are paid through Part B pass-through funds.

The state level evaluation section has an authorized staff of seven professionals. Evaluations are conducted on an in-house basis. Results are distributed to SPA and regional staff members, to Commission members, and to selected state, local and project personnel. Through its newsletter, the Commission announces the availability of finished reports to the criminal justice community. The evaluation unit also participates in the grant review process, has established minimum data collection and reporting requirements for certain classes of projects, and provides assistance in designing evaluations to organizations receiving LEAA discretionary grants. Minimum data requirements have been established for approximately 40 projects; and the unit, at present, is implementing evaluation designs for another 50 projects. To date, the section has produced 25 interim or final evaluation reports.

The following discussion describes the operation of the SPA and the role of the evaluation section in greater detail.

A. SPA Management Procedures

The SPA operates on a yearly cycle whose main elements are the development of a comprehensive plan for criminal justice improvements in the state, a single grant processing and award period, and the administration of grants.

1. *Development of the plan.* The comprehensive plan is developed by the planning and program development section of the state staff in cooperation with other sections of the SPA staff, regional council staffs and state agencies. In the past, participation by state agencies and regional and local officials has consisted primarily of developing a "profile" of demographic, socioeconomic and crime characteristics of each region. Regions also have prepared statements of needs and problems and suggested projects they wish the SPA to support. These materials were then considered by the SPA staff in developing the plan. Starting with FY 1974, regional councils have also developed comprehensive regional plans based on extensive guidelines developed by the Commission and the regional councils. The Policies and Planning Guidelines for 1975 set forth:

> 1) The overall goals that the Commission wishes to promote in the area of criminal justice; 2) Standards for the implementation of these general goals; 3) Guidelines for the development of local and regional criminal justice plans; 4) Tentative 1975 program areas and objectives; 5) Procedures for submission, review, distribution, and utilization of regional plans; 6) Criteria for the review of regional plans; 7) Guidelines for state agency planning information; and 8) Format and minimum data requirements for regional plans.

Recently, the regional staffs have been given an estimate of the proportion of the block grant expected to be awarded to subgrantees in their region.

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[1] *1970 Census of Population*, Volume 1, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C.

Preliminary suggestions for projects are presented by the regional councils and state agencies, using project description forms that identify the problem, document the need for the project, give project goals and major activities, and estimate costs. The suggestions are developed on the basis of such items as:

- local interests and problems,
- consultations with potential subgrantees,
- program and project descriptions given in previous comprehensive plans,
- policy statements issued by the Commission, and
- interactions with state staff members.

Using these project suggestions and other information on criminal justice problems, the state staff develops a draft comprehensive plan. The action portion includes project descriptions corresponding to the suggestions accepted from the regions and state agencies. In some cases, the plan identifies the intended subgrantee. The state staff generally does not develop detailed project designs. However, where there is a well-documented problem of high priority to the Commission and no project has been proposed by the regional staffs, the state staff may describe the type of project desired.

A draft of the staff's plan is reviewed by relevant state agencies, regional staffs, and subcommittees of the Commission. A final draft is then prepared and submitted to the Commission for review and approval.

In summary, the state staff actively controls and influences the plan development process and prepares the draft presented to the Commission. However, it coordinates with the regional staffs and state agencies and utilizes material prepared by them if it meets the established guidelines and criteria.

2. *Grant development and review process.* As the plan is being developed, the grant development and review cycle is being initiated. The various stages and participants are:

- *Preliminary project descriptions.* Preliminary project descriptions are submitted to the SPA by potential subgrantees to identify projects that they would like to have included in the comprehensive plan and eventually funded. The SPA planning unit reviews them and takes them into consideration when developing the comprehensive plan.
- *Development of grant applications.* Once a preliminary project description is accepted by the state staff for inclusion in the comprehensive plan, regional, state agency, and SPA personnel begin work with potential subgrantees to develop specific grant applications. These grant applications are reviewed by regional councils and state agencies before submission to the Commission.
- *State review of grant applications.* The state staff reviews grant applications in a team basis with teams organized by program area. Four people usually constitute a team—two planners, one evaluator, and one grants analyst—and review 20 to 30 grant applications accounting for $1 to $3 million in LEAA funds. In general, the planners are responsible for reviewing programmatic questions, the grants analyst is responsible for budget questions, and the evaluator is responsible for statements of goals and objectives, evaluation designs, and data collection plans. However, each member of the team is encouraged to consider all aspects of a grant application.

  Following an initial review, the team may identify additional information needed, questions that should be answered, and modifications or special conditions they believe are appropriate. After a joint meeting with the regional staff to review all issues in question about the grant, the problems are conveyed to the applicant, the sponsoring agency and the appropriate regional council for response. After receiving the responses, the team makes a final decision on the grant application and ranks all grants in order of priority recommended for funding. The team also develops "special conditions" recommended for addition to the grant if it is approved.

  The staff recommendations are then reviewed by Commission subcommittees organized by program area. After review and public hearings, the subcommittees forward the grant applications to the full Commission with recommendations for funding and special conditions.

  The above procedures are used for processing both first year projects and those requesting refunding.

3. *Grants Administration.* Once approved, all grants are administered through the state staff. Technically grants are monitored by the SPA's Grants Administration Section, which has responsibility for approving monthly payments, authorizing grant modifications, and obtaining monitoring information from quarterly project reports and from site visits. But evaluators and planners also maintain close

contact with many projects, and evaluators often are the state staff members most familiar with the project.

If the Commission has attached a special condition to a grant, the team member who recommended it is responsible for seeing that the subgrantee complies with it. Typical special conditions added to many grants for FY 1974 at the request of the Evaluation Unit are:

- "Project personnel must meet with evaluation staff members to develop phrasing of goal and objective statements acceptable to the evaluation unit (basic criteria for acceptability—achievement can be measured)," and
- "Project personnel must develop plans for a data collection system that can be used to determine whether goals and objectives are met."

In general, the regional councils are not involved in implementing approved grants, but they receive copies of all reports and other material concerning projects in their areas.

B. The Development and Current Operation of the Evaluation System

The Evaluation Unit was created in 1972 under an action grant through the Office of the Governor to the Commission. Previously, evaluations were conducted through contracts or by subgrantees. In general, these evaluations were judged to be of little value to state, local, or SPA decision makers.

The use of evaluation and evaluators has been evolving over the last several years as the Evaluation Unit has become more established within the SPA management system and has begun to produce evaluation results. At present the Evaluation Unit sees itself as providing four major types of support: conducting evaluations, participating in the grants review process, establishing minimum data requirements for selected projects, and providing technical assistance to state and local agencies on evaluation.

1. *Conducting evaluations.* Conducting evaluations is the primary activity of the Evaluation Unit and consumes most of its resources. It currently is evaluating about 50 projects. Some evaluations will cover several projects and last several years while others focus on a single project and are of shorter duration.

Originally, the ability to cover as many projects as possible with a single design was a primary criterion in selecting what should be evaluated. Currently the selection of subjects for evaluation is based on:

- Expressed interest of the Commission.
- Interest of state staff planners in obtaining specific information.
- Feasibility of evaluating the particular program—including the availability of staff resources.

However, there is still a tendency to focus on clusters of similar projects for reasons of economy and in order to make cross project comparisons and address issues covering an entire program area.

Since establishment of the Evaluation Unit, all SPA evaluations are conducted on an in-house basis. The Evaluation Unit develops the evaluation design, collects and analyzes data, and prepares a report. In almost all cases evaluation designs have been developed after one or more projects began operating, and they are aimed at determining if stated objectives and goals are achieved. In developing evaluation designs, the staff analyzes project descriptions in grant applications and consults with other SPA staff sections and subgrantees. Once a design is developed, the evaluator then administers the data collection and analysis. In some cases the subgrantee collects the data and forwards it to the evaluator using data forms developed by the Evaluation Unit. In other cases, the Evaluation Unit collects the data itself, frequently using students for collecting, coding and processing data under the direction of a staff evaluator.

In conducting intensive evaluations, the unit attempts to serve a variety of users.

Commission: The Project Evaluation Unit was initially funded to provide the Commission and its staffs with information on Commission-funded projects. Most evaluations have been initiated to assist the Commission in setting policy and deciding upon individual grants. While all evaluation results are presented to the Commission, its use of them appears to be limited to decisions on special conditions that the staff recommends to be added to grants. In general, the Commission tends to concentrate on the 'fund or not fund" type of decision. However, most evaluation results produced to date have not provided sufficient information to support such decisions. Examples can still be cited, however, where evaluation results did affect Commission policy. In particular, after an in-depth evaluation of police/school liaison projects, the Commission adopted a negative attitude toward further funding of such projects unless certain conditions were met.

Planners: Based on recent experiences, the Evaluation Unit has come to believe that they can best affect Commission decisions by making results of evaluation studies available to planners when they are reviewing grant applications. The effect is manifested in three ways:

- When projects request refunding, the evaluation results provide planners with information for developing special conditions and suggesting modifications to improve project operations and results.
- Evaluations identify characteristics of successful and unsuccessful projects that planners can use in assessing similar projects.
- Evaluation results are used as a basis for guidelines and criteria to be followed in developing the comprehensive plan.

Project Personnel: The Evaluation Unit considers project managers to be a high priority customer for evaluation results in the future. SPA evaluation results have been used to secure continuation funding for projects from state and local units of government when SPA funding ended, but this sort of use has not been extensive.

In some cases, evaluation results can also affect the management of the project during its operation, but most intensive evaluation results apply to longer range changes and effects. Consequently, short-term information needs of a project have not generally been considered in the design of evaluations.

Some projects have asked the Evaluation Unit for computerized printouts to facilitate their reporting of required information to other governmental agencies.

Regional Council Staffs: Since the regional council staffs do the initial development work on most projects funded by the Commission, the Evaluation Unit believes that evaluation results should be available to these planners. However, evaluation results typically are not available in time to affect regional planners and, in most cases, are not presented in a manner to facilitate the use of them by regional staffs. The unit is attempting to alter the scheduling of its evaluations so that completed reports are available for regional council use in developing and reviewing grant applications prior to submission to the Commission.

Local and State Agencies Sponsoring Subgrantees: In most cases, local and state agencies must decide whether to continue funding a project after SPA support ends. For this reason, the Evaluation Unit believes that the SPA should provide both negative and positive evaluation results to these agencies. However, such agencies have made very little use of evaluation results. Part of the problem, as seen by the Evaluation Unit, is in timing evaluation results so that they can be used in local and state agency planning cycles. Also, it has been a problem determining exactly who in local and state agencies should receive evaluation results and who would act on them if they were available.

2. *Grants review process.* As indicated above, evaluators are used in the grant review process to make grant applications more precise and to facilitate the evaluation and monitoring of projects. The Evaluation Unit review focuses on goals and objectives to ensure that they are stated in such a manner that progress can be measured, and on data collection and analysis to ensure that they are adequate to measure planned achievements.

3. *Minimum data requirements.* Progress reports are recived from all projects, but most of the information is sketchy and lacks comparability. The Unit, therefore, has established "minimum data requirements" for certain projects involving delivery of services, such as: youth service bureaus, legal advocacy and defense, community service coordination and referral, alternative education, training grants, and probation and parole. The requested data relate primarily to client characteristics, activities and past behavior; services provided for clients; and measures of the effect which the project has on clients.

4. *Technical assistance.* The fourth type of evaluation activity involves providing technical assistance to applicants for LEAA discretionary grants who wish to develop evaluation designs for proposed projects. The Evaluation Unit then monitors these grants to see if the evaluation is being implemented according to design.

In summary, Minnesota has centralized its evaluation activities at the state level and has developed an inhouse staff that both conducts intensive evaluations and handles other SPA activities. It is not likely that every state could adopt this approach, however. In particular, the following characteristics of the Minnesota SPA seem to contribute to its feasibility there:

- The overall planning and management process is centralized at the state staff level.
- There is a sufficiently large pool of resources to support an in-house staff.
- There are enough projects to justify an in-house evaluation staff comparable in size to other SPA components.

C. Lessons from the Minnesota Evaluation Experiences

1. *Successes and notable ideas.* The Evaluation Unit believes its greatest impact so far has been the

use of evaluation results by planners in the grant application review process. Several projects requesting refunding have been modified or had special conditions added as a result of recommendations by the Evaluation Unit. However, this impact is thought to be less vital than changing overall SPA policy guidelines. Consequently, the Unit is focusing its efforts on broad studies which enable it to address problems in a total program area.

By providing useful information and services, the Evaluation Unit is having an effect both on project designs and on continuation decisions. It has also been expanding the uses for evaluation information by decision makers outside the SPA. Other impacts and successes include the establishment of minimum data requirements and the forcing of subgrantees and program planners to develop goals and objectives that can be used to evaluate projects and programs. By improving the goal and objective statements in grant applications, the Evaluation Unit is providing a basis for monitoring and evaluation and, therefore, for more precise management of projects. At the same time the Unit is forcing projects to develop data systems that allow a determination on whether projects are meeting their objectives and goals.

The following quote from an internal Commission report summarizes the rationale and advantages that the Evaluation Unit sees in the centralized approach to evaluation:

> A unified evaluation system ensures consistency of information, comparability of measures and results across projects and across types of projects; permits an assessment of cost effectiveness across projects; reduces development costs of designs; results in consistency of evaluation procedures; and provides a single standard of quality control. A unified system also avoids a proliferation of forms and reports containing evaluation information so that the paper flow will be minimized as will the reporting burden placed on individual projects lessen. In short, centralized evaluation makes the best use of evaluation funds.

Much of the success of the Evaluation Unit can be attributed to: (1) the size and capabilities of its staff, (2) the inclusion of the Unit as an integral part of the SPA management process, and (3) the willingness of the SPA staff to use evaluation results.

2. *Problems with the system.* The Evaluation Unit has identified two major problem areas: timing and conflicts with evaluation activities of other government organizations.

The timing problems arise because the Unit normally is evaluating projects over which it has no direct control. Due to start-up delays, first year projects frequently have not operated long enough to permit evaluation results to be available for second year funding decisions. Other projects require several years to demonstrate effectiveness. The Unit had some success in producing interim reports geared to the SPA staff and Commission schedules, but it still has difficulty timing reports to help regional councils and local government units

Conflicts may occur as local and state agencies develop evaluation units that analyze both SPA funded projects and their own projects. Some conflicts have already developed over evaluation design and data collection activities, and there is concern that a proliferation of designs and data collection efforts may place too great a burden on subgrantees. The SPA Evaluation Unit believes that the local units should develop their own evaluation capabilities; however, the SPA does not yet feel free to relinquish its own evaluation responsibility as conflicts develop.

Funding for evaluation has also presented a problem. At present the Unit is funded through an SPA action grant with a 25 percent match provided by the state legislature. The SPA has a general policy of not funding grants past three years, and of reducing the percent of SPA input during the three years. But since it was felt that the state legislature would not be willing to increase the percentage of contribution, SPA support has remained at 75 percent and the 3-year limit for this grant has recently been waived.

3. *Plans for the future.* The Evaluation Unit is likely to continue operating as it was during the last three years. Emphasis will be placed on expanding the standardized minimum data collection requirements and including them in the grant application instructions so that prospective subgrantees will be aware of data requirements in advance. The Unit expects to increase its in-depth evaluation activities in areas of interest to the Commission and planning staff, and it is attempting to coordinate the timing of evaluations with decision cycles of both the Commission and local and state agencies. The Unit is also participating in staff efforts to develop a monitoring system that conforms to the new LEAA guidelines. Once such a system is developed, the Evaluation Unit can shift its concentration from individual project studies and interim reports to comprehensive studies.

II. PENNSYLVANIA

The Governor's Justice Commission, the Pennsylvania State Planning Agency, receives an action grant of $30 million annually which funds approximately 600 state and local projects. In addition to a central staff of 76 that administers the program from Harrisburg, the SPA has eight regional offices that have grants management and fiscal responsibilities for local projects. Local planning is carried out by eight Regional Planning Councils (RPCs) and staffs. The dual nature of the SPA and regional administration of the Safe Streets Act program at the local level has created a truly decentralized policy and funding process in Pennsylvania.

A. SPA Management Procedures

About 80 percent of Pennsylvania's action grant is apportioned among the eight regions in block form. Since the state action grant has stayed the same the past few years, the regions know approximately what their share will be and plan accordingly.

The remaining action grant monies are state discretionary funds reserved for state agencies and for special SPA projects. As with Regional Planning Council grants, each state agency knows in advance approximately the amount of funds available to it. Although the SPA presently prepares the state plan essentially by collating regional plans and projects proposed by state agencies, efforts are being made to carry out programmatic planning.

The process for selecting and funding individual local projects begins as the field representative of the SPA regional office or a planner on the Regional Planning Council staff works with an applicant to develop a subgrant application. Before submission to the Regional Council staff, the application must meet criteria given in a check-off list for completeness and compliance with instructions. The 90-day processing requirement begins when the application is submitted to the RPC staff for processing. Fifty days are allotted for processing on the regional level: the Regional SPA and Planning Council staffs review the application and make their recommendations to the Regional Planning Council, and the Regional Planning Council votes its recommendation for approval or disapproval to the Governor's Justice Commission. On or by the 50th day, the application must be submitted to the SPA for overall fiscal and programmatic review.

Application for state agency or special projects supported by discretionary funds are normally reviewed by the SPA staff in Harrisburg, but if the project has a specific regional impact it is also reviewed by regional personnel and presented to the Regional Planning Council for its endorsement.

Prior to the monthly meeting of the Commission, SPA staff division managers attend an executive staff review covering all projects on the agenda and form a consensus recommendation to the Commission. Evaluation findings and recommendations are considered at that review even if they have already been considered by the Regional Planning Council. A project review sheet is completed for each project, summarizing information about the project and the recommendations of the Regional Planning Council and the SPA executive staff. In the meantime, the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit has prepared a project evaluation summary for projects that were independently evaluated and a project monitoring summary for projects monitored by the SPA executive staff. The summaries are distributed to the Commission members a week before the meeting.

B. The Development and Current Operation of the Evaluation System

Before 1973, the Commission provided no central direction to evaluation activities. A few subgrantees contracted for evaluation of their projects, but the results were generally of low quality, partly because of the evaluators' lack of independence and objectivity.

The impetus for developing an evaluation system came in late 1972 from the Commission's requests for information and the need to satisfy LEAA's requirements. Due to limited SPA resources and legal constraints on the use of funds for evaluation, subgrantee funds were used to contract with independent evaluators operating under SPA control and management. In February 1973, the Commission formally created the Evaluation Management Unit with responsibility "to insure the comprehensive evaluation of activities supported by the Commission." The Commission also declared that no request for continued funding of a project would be considered unless some assessment had been made of its accomplishments.

In accordance with the Commission's recommendation that independent evaluation be used, the Evaluation Management Unit solicited qualification information from interested consultants, research firms, and academic groups and assembled a Catalogue of Potential Evaluators (COPE). Criteria were established for selection of projects to be evaluated, standard contract agreements were drawn up, and standard reporting formats and requirements were developed. In the spring of 1973 the evaluation system was implemented.

The system was designed to require the RPC staff to work closely with the Evaluation Management Unit staff. As an application for a project requiring evaluation [1] was developed, the Regional staff notified the SPA evaluation staff and advised the applicant to set aside 3 to 5 percent of his budget for evaluation. The Evaluation Management Unit selected several potential evaluators from COPE and sent their names to the Regional staff, which then sent each potential evaluator a standard Request For Proposal (RFP) and a description of the proposed project. Proposals were reviewed at the regional level and transmitted to the Evaluation Unit for final selection and approval. Selection of the evaluator was based on the proposal's responsiveness to the RFP, the quality of the evaluation design, and the evaluator's proposed budget. Whenever possible, an evaluator was tentatively selected before the Commission voted on the project, and the nominee was notified that if the project were approved, he would be the evaluator. This procedure allowed the proposal to be modified to incorporate evaluation procedures, if necessary, before the subgrant award.

Recent changes give regional offices the primary responsibility for managing the evaluation of local projects. Each will receive a copy of COPE, the standardized forms and letters developed, and the written procedures. The SPA Evaluation and Monitoring Unit (formerly the Evaluation Management Unit) will oversee the use of evaluators from COPE —so that none is selected for too many concurrent evaluations—and will monitor the flow of and quality of evaluation reports. However, its first job under decentralization will be to help the regions assume primary responsibility for operating the evaluation system. The Evaluation and Monitoring Unit will retain responsibility for managing independent evaluations for state agency and special projects.

Decentralization was motivated in part by the SPA's conviction that as the regional staffs became more involved in the evaluation process, they would realize the benefits of evaluation as a management tool for their own planning and decision making. This conviction was reinforced by proposed LEAA evaluation guidelines which require intensive evaluation only according to planning needs. Since actual planning is done by the RPC staffs, it was concluded that evaluation should also be designed and conducted at the regional level in Pennsylvania.

In the first year of the evaluation system, the greatest impact at the project level appears to be better managed projects. Independent evaluators have often found themselves providing technical assistance in all aspects of project operations, from specific treatment modalities to management procedures. Evaluators also have forced project directors to focus more clearly on the objectives of their project and to define the problem and scope of project activities more precisely. The improved management and organization has convinced many project directors that independent evaluation is useful for their own purposes and is not just a watchdog activity. Project directors have appreciated the technical assistance from the evaluator and have generally been willing to implement his recommendations. As a result, projects are more likely to succeed, and there are fewer of the confrontations in which negative evaluation findings embarass the political supporters of a project.

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[1] Earlier criteria relied essentially on the amount of federal funds—$100,000 or more—as the critical factor. Projects of potential statewide impact were also evaluated. As the system developed and was decentralized, it was necessary to establish more substantive criteria: "(1) Projects which are particularly innovative, controversial, or potentially dramatic in impact. Also, those model or pilot projects with potential replicability throughout the Region or State. (The Regional Staff should notify the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit immediately if they decide *not* to independently evaluate projects of this type.) (2) Those projects of a technical or programmatic nature which extend them outside the bounds of Regional Staff expertise. (3) Multi-faceted projects which would require excessive staff time to monitor effectively. (4) Projects thought to be potentially viable, but whose operations and management could benefit by the implementation of systematic and constructive evaluation. (5) Those projects which represent a substantial investment of Regional funds, i.e., those significantly in excess of the median Regional subgrant."

Evaluation results have had a further use at the project level through SPA dissemination of evaluation reports to other regions or localities considering a similar project. The Evaluation and Monitoring Unit hopes to go further and become a statewide clearinghouse for criminal justice evaluation.

On the regional level, discontinuation of local projects traditionally has been caused by a shortage of Federal funds rather than by the project's own shortcomings. But in the evaluation system's first year, discontinued projects have generally been those shown by evaluation to have negligible impact or inefficient management, typically the "worst" project or projects within the region.

Although the Commission itself initiated evaluation by asking for information on project results, it has been slow to accept and utilize evaluation findings. However, recent experiences indicate an increasing use of evaluation information in Executive Staff Review rcommendations. This is important since, even when the Commission votes against the recommendations of its staff and the independent evaluator, it tends to place special conditions on a grant based on those recommendations.

While encouraged by the growing acceptance of evaluation, the SPA staff has realized that its responsibility does not end with producing evaluation information. Experience has shown that use of evaluation information depends not upon its availability but upon its presentation. The inclusion of mere summaries of evaluation reports in briefing materials for Commission members is not sufficient; the reports must also present evaluation information in the broader context of its policy implications and policy alternatives.

In summary, the Pennsylvania system approaches evaluation on a decentralized, project-by-project basis with a state level staff exercising quality control and coordination. Evaluations are performed by contractors using project funds. This approach has been adopted to accommodate the decentralized nature of the Pennsylvania SPA management itself, in which most decisions affecting operations are made on a project-by-project basis at the regional level. But in centralizing the evaluation system, the SPA has not mandated that the regions adopt the approach. This fredom may eventually result in a variety of evaluation systems among the eight regions.

C. Lessons from the Pennsylvania Evaluation Experiences

1. *Successes and notable ideas.* In less than one year, the SPA's Evaluation Unit developed and implemented a comprehensive system of project evaluation which exceeded LEAA's requirements. Some 100 independent project evaluations were arranged using $750,000 of project funds. In a report to the Commission in November 1973, the director said that he knew "of no other state with such a comprehensive system of project evaluation."

Evaluation has gained widespread acceptance in Pennsylvania. Many criminal justice project directors have found that the technical assistance and feedback by an independent evaluator result in a better managed and more productive project. Although evaluation has led to few decisions not to refund a project, it has highlighted major problems and forced review of project policies, procedures and focus.

One interesting feature of Pennsylvania's system is the procedures for improving use of evaluation findings. Guidelines were established not only for the frequency of reporting but for the format and content as well. The project director was allowed to respond to the evaluator's report as a way of assessing its accuracy. In addition, evaluation summaries are provided to Regional Planning Council and Commission members, and the evaluator is required to attend Regional Planning Council and Commission meetings when projects are considered for continuation funding.

The Pennsylvania system also has established, written procedures and forms and can thus continue to operate despite the high turnover rate common to SPA staffs. In addition, it has enabled the evaluation staff to transfer management of the system to the regions.

The Pennsylvania system also overcomes a problem faced by many states—that of completing compliance with state bidding procedures prior to the subgrant award so that the evaluation can begin simultaneously with the project. Although Pennsylvania's requirements for bidding and contracts may be simpler than those of other states, the principal solution to the problem was to have competitive bidding for the evaluation contract take place concurrently with the subgrant application process.

2. *Problems with the system.* One problem with the Pennsylvania system is the amount of time and paperwork necessary to operate it. The system is

indeed complex. It includes: the solicitation for proposals, the selection of one on a competitive basis, and the subsequent negotiations; the contractual agreements which must be signed by the subgrantee, the evaluator, and the SPA specifying responsibilities of all involved; the detailed requirements for the reporting format and frequencies; and the procedures for allowing the project director to respond to the evaluator's findings. The procedure is further complicated by the SPA maintaining some central control. Although much paperwork was eliminated through decentralization, coordination between the regions and the SPA evaluation staff still necessitate more paperwork than desirable.

The evaluation staff also has found that a project evaluator usually does not remain neutral and tends to align himself either with the SPA that requests the evaluation or the subgrantee who pays him. The evaluation may be more objective in the first case than in the second; however, in the second the increased cooperation between the project director and the evaluator may result in a more efficiently run project. Although independence of the evaluator is an essential element of the system, the Evaluation Unit believes it may be more appropriate to sacrifice absolute objectively for improved program or project effectiveness.

It was initially intended that evaluators would help applicants refine their project design—e.g., by setting measurable objectives and stating the problem in quantifiable terms. However, this did not work in practice since evaluation funds were a part of subgrant funds. The evaluators could not be paid until after the subgrant award was made, and regulations did not permit payment of pre-incurred costs. As a result, evaluators cannot begin work until the project is about to be implemented, and much of the evaluator's time is spent assisting the project director in further designing the project. Attempts have been made to train regional personnel to develop adequate project descriptions but, partly because of the high staff turnover and time constraints, project descriptions continue to be less than adequate.

At the time the system was developed, the procedure of using a project's funds for its own evaluation was felt to rule out cluster or program evaluations. But a 1973 LEAA legal decision has eased the former restrictions somewhat, and the evaluation staff hopes to undertake some cluster evaluations.[3]

In its report to the Commission in November 1973, the evaluation staff pointed out that since program planning and policy development occur on the regional level, there are no SPA overall goals against which to evaluate. Evaluating individual projects does not fulfill the broader mission of assessing overall program performance. Evaluation in the Pennsylvania SPA still suffers from the lack of statewide goals.

3. *Plans for the future.* Despite decentralization, the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit's staff of three (including the chief) continues to have a role. They expect to spend much of the next grant year helping the regions assume management of the evaluation system, through assistance to individual regions as well as general training sessions. The evaluation staff has offered to help the regions develop alternative evaluation approaches. In addition, some overall coordination will be necessary, such as updating the Catalogue of Potential Evaluators and monitoring the use of individual evaluators. The staff also foresees an expanding role as a clearinghouse for dissemination of evaluation reports to state and local agencies and the regions.

The Evaluation and Monitoring Unit will continue to manage the evaluation of state agency projects. It will also continue to assemble evaluation reports and other materials for both the Executive Staff Review and Commission meetings.

Guidelines recently issued by the Commission outline modified quarterly progress reporting and monitoring procedures in which the SPA staff will play a coordinating role with the regions.

The evaluation staff soon will propose adding two staff members, primarily to develop and implement program evaluation. They feel that *project* evaluation has been a first step, and now *program* evaluation is needed to support recommendations to the Commission for changes in policy.

Another high priority item is the development of standard performance indicators for similar projects, which the staff feels can be done using completed evaluations and materials developed and shared by other states.

Finally, the staff hopes to provide seed money for an evaluator in each SPA regional office who will provide liaison and continued technical assistance to the Regional Planning Council staff.

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[3] The LEAA General Counsel rendered a legal decision in November, 1973 interpreting the Act to allow the use of Part C funds (with 10 percent match) to pay for contracted evaluations and to support SPA staff who would conduct evaluations themselves.

III. MASSACHUSETTS

The Massachusetts Committee on Criminal Justice—the state's SPA—funds relatively few projects compared to other states; its FY 1974 action funds, approximately $15 million, supported about 150 projects. The LEAA program in the state is highly centralized; most planning and funding decisions are made by the SPA staff. There are no regional planning units, but seven Criminal Justice Development Agencies (CJDA) in the mayors' offices of the largest cities in the state are funded with Part B planning monies. These agencies work with the SPA staff in developing the state's annual comprehensive plan but do not submit plans of their own. With few exceptions, all of Massachusetts' annual action funds are awarded to the CJDAs and to state or county agencies.

A. SPA Management Procedures

The Massachusetts SPA divides the criminal justice system into seven categorical areas: drugs, police, courts, corrections, probation, juvenile delinquency, and youth services. The basic policy of the Committee has been that "efforts should be distributed evenly among all areas of the Criminal Justice System. . . ."[1] Thus, from the beginning of the planning cycle, the approximate level of funds for each area is determined.

Traditionally, the annual comprehensive plan was prepared through negotiations between state and local officials. SPA specialists conferred with local authorities and state agency officials to define programs and projects which those officials wished to operate under LEAA support. The plan thus consisted of a number of fairly well-defined projects for which funds were set aside. When the intended subgrantee officially submitted an application for the project later, approval tended to be smooth and speedy.

This process has resulted in problems when intended subgrantees, for one reason or another, did not submit the applications. Funds have been tied up, and last-minute reallocations were frequently required.

Two changes in planning procedures for 1975 are expected to alleviate that problem. The first step involves consultations among program specialists, state and local officials, and other SPA staff members focusing on general strategies—rather than specific projects—for meeting the state's criminal justice needs. A draft plan discussing problems, needs and strategies will then be submitted to the committee; when it is approved, it will be distributed to state agencies and CJDAs. The second major change is in the application procedures. After the draft plan is circulated, there will be a short period during which all subgrant applications for the year will be accepted. If an expected application does not materialize, the money can be reallocated immediately instead of at the end of the fiscal year.

Evaluation considerations have been included in the planning process since 1971 through the evaluation director's participation in staff meetings at which the plan is prepared. The evaluation director suggests programs and projects to be evaluated, based on the relative priority of a program, the anticipated continuation of a program, its readiness for evaluation, and the funds available for evaluation. An evaluation plan—designating specific programs to be evaluated and program areas from which other projects will later be selected—is agreed to at the planning session. Naming general program areas in addition to specific programs provides the Evaluation Unit flexibility to respond to specific requests during the year.

B. Development and Current Operation of the Evaluation System

Prior to July of 1971, evaluation was handled primarily by individual subgrantees. But the SPA staff felt the quality was generally poor and the evaluations "were generally not utilized for the improvement of program decisions."[2] In one case, the evaluator developed such close rapport with the program he was evaluating and gave so much technical assistance that his reports were innocuous and lacked objectivity. The Committee staff felt it needed more control over evaluations, so in 1971 a planner was hired to serve as evaluation director. His first few months were spent developing an evaluation program for the comprehensive plan, learning about the SPA decision-making structure, and educating the rest of the staff about evaluation.

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[1] 1974 Comprehensive Criminal Justice Plan for Massachusetts.

[2] Memorandum "Review of Evaluation Program" June 19, 1973, from Arnold R. Rosenfeld, Executive Director.

Currently, evaluation activities can be divided into three categories: major evaluation studies by a university; evaluation studies by consultants or contractors, funded through an action grant from the SPA to itself; and technical assistance by the evaluation director and his assistant to state agencies and CJDAs.

Two large grants ($154,149 and $93,316 in FY 1974) have been awarded to Harvard University's Center for Criminal Justice Studies, with the university providing the cash match. One study is a 5-year evaluation of the evolution of the Department of Youth Services from institutional to community-based care and treatment. The other is "designed to document and assess the joint efforts of the Department of Corrections and the Parole Board to develop a community-based rehabilitation system in the Greater Boston area."[a] These evaluations are of interest not only to the Committee but to the state agencies whose programs are being evaluated and the state legislature, which approves funds for the programs.

Since 1972, the SPA has awarded itself an action grant for "Evaluation Research" ($175,000 in FY 1974), with the state providing the cash match. This money is used to evaluate a few programs and projects specified in the annual plan, plus programs or projects selected later in listed areas.

The evaluation director is involved with each evaluation study from beginning to end. He starts by proposing the evaluations to be conducted. When a program has been chosen, the evaluation director, the SPA program specialist, and CJDA or state agency planners discuss the issues that the evaluation should address. The evaluation director then prepares a detailed research design, working closely with the planners and program area specialist. A request for proposals is issued, specifying the questions to be addressed in the evaluation, the research activities to be used in answering the questions, the valuation model and analytical methods to be employed, and a timetable for specific tasks. Thus, respondents are not expected to prepare evaluation designs or develop new methods, although they are welcome to suggest changes in the design.

The winning proposer and his assistants are usually hired as consultants, and their work is directly supervised by the Evaluation Unit staff. Occasionally, a contractor will be hired to perform the evaluation, usually when the Evaluation Unit cannot give adequate direct supervision itself.

The frequent use of consultants rather than contractors, the role played by the evaluation director in designing evaluations, and the close control by the staff during the execution of evaluation efforts are the most notable features of the Massachusetts system. These permit the Evaluation Unit to exert a considerable amount of control over evaluation quality.

As interim evaluation reports are prepared, the evaluation director and his assistant review them, and before the final report is completed the evaluator briefs the appropriate program specialists and agency or community people, the SPA evaluators, and occasionally Commission members. These sessions serve a twofold purpose. Evaluation activities are often conducted by university people during the summer, and their reports typically are not finished in time for the September-October SPA planning sessions; having briefings in late summer or early September allows findings to be used for planning and refunding decisions. Secondly, the briefings provide an opportunity to raise issues of which the consultant may not be aware but which may influence his recommendations.

The third major evaluation activity is the provision of technical assistance by the evaluation director and his assistant to state agencies and CJDAs. The Department of Corrections and the Parole Board have expressed interest in and a need for evaluation. The evaluation director regularly works with the Evaluation Unit at the Department of Corrections, and LEAA funds provided by the SPA have enabled the Department to set up a planning unit and a data collection system.

At least two CJDAs have recognized a need for evaluation and frequently request the assistance of the SPA Evaluation Unit in planning for and designing evaluations. During the FY 1975 planning process, two CJDAs were asked to prepare a list of projects they would like evaluated, so they could be considered by the evaluation director in preparing the state's evaluation plan. The hope is that those

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[a] 1974 Comprehensive Criminal Justice Plan for Massachusetts.

CJDAs will soon have their own full time evaluators to design evaluations, with some assistance from the SPA evaluation director.

Massachusetts' evaluation system, with control centralized in the SPA, is a reflection of the style or philosophy of the entire SPA organization. It restricts the distribution of funds to very few communities and few projects, so that the agency can exert a considerable amount of influence over what projects will be funded. Just as the evaluation director is involved in the design of almost all evaluations, so the planners are instrumental in determining programs and program areas in which projects will be funded.

C. Lessons from the Massachusetts Evaluation Experiences

1. *Successes and notable ideas.* Several major evaluations have been completed in the three years since the evaluation policy was changed. Some have had or are having major impact on programs they evaluated. Standards have been developed for a large program, one agency was completely reorganized and refunding decisions have been affected.

Program specialists see evaluation as useful in developing or recommending changes in programs. To assure that evaluation results are useful, program specialists meet several times with the evaluation director to discuss what information the specialists need for future planning and what information is feasible to collect.

If an evaluation has been requested by a CJDA planner, he too will discuss his information needs with the evaluation director.

Massachusetts' system of hiring consultants for evaluation is considered economical and practical—economical because the only costs are for salaries and other expenses directly related to evaluation rather than the overhead costs associated with third-party contracts, and practical because it is easier for the SPA staff to exert control over consultants than contractors. But it takes a great deal of the evaluation director's and his assistant's time.

2. *Problems with the system.* Evaluation in Massachusetts depends heavily upon the evaluation director's talents. He develops the evalaution plan and a significant part of each evaluation design using extensive personal interactions. Since no clearly defined, institutionalized procedures exist, the whole system would probably run into serious difficulties in the absence of the evaluation director.

The small size of the Evalaution Unit (a director and a specialist)—combined with the amount of time they spend on each evaluation—limit the number of evaluations that can be performed. The evaluation director thinks this problem could be solved with additional staff.

3. *Plans for the future.* Several changes in evaluation procedures are being implemented now or soon will be. A few have already been mentioned.

A full-time consultant is being hired for 18 months to help the evaluation director and his assistant design evaluations in a major program area. He will design one major evaluation study immediately and is expected to do others later.

In the past, local units of government, which are expected to use evaluation information in deciding whether to fund a project, have not been consulted about their informational needs. The evaluation director expects to do so with some future evaluations, but he anticipates that a single evaluation involving several projects cannot always satisfy the information needs of each project or its sponsoring agency.

IV. VIRGINIA

Virginia is a moderately large state, with 4.7 million people in the 1970 census. The total block grant for 1973 was $12.1 million, with an additional $1.1 million of Part B funds. The SPA awards nearly 600 grants each year and has around 800 projects active at any one time. Since state agencies have considerable control over many local criminal justice activities in Virginia, a fairly large percentage of the block grant (about 40 percent) goes to state agencies.

The Safe Streets Act funds are administered by a central staff of 59, which normally includes two evaluators, 13 program coordinators, two planners, and about 13 other professionals. The state is covered by 22 comprehensive regional planning commissions, each of which has criminal justice planners on its staff. Compared to the other SPAs described in this appendix, Virginia may be characterized as having a strong, active state commission, with the regions having a modest amount of influence on decisions.

The SPA has undertaken one large intensive evaluation effort. This effort is for the High Incidence Target program, which supports crime prevention projects in eleven local jurisdictions. The SPA intends, through the evaluation, to compare the relative effectiveness of different local crime prevention strategies and to disseminate the results to localities throughout the state.

The Virginia SPA also has developed a feedback system using site visits and semi-structured interviews by outside consultants. Although this system does not normally produce intensive evaluations as defined in this manual, the Virginia experiences contain some lessons which may benefit other SPAs.

The following discussion describes the SPA's administrative operations and evaluation activities.

A. SPA Management Procedures

1. *Development of the plan.* The state plan each year is developed by the SPA staff using the 22 regional criminal justice plan submissions and inputs from relevant state agencies. Although regional plans and state agency submissions frequently include specific projects, the state plan usually concentrates on general program strategies. Thus, in Virginia funds are not set aside for specific projects during state plan development, as is done in many other states.

The SPA staff recommends and the state Council approves allocation of funds among predefined program categories. These categories generally remain unchanged from year to year, but occasionally new categories are developed, existing ones are redefined, and others are deleted. In recent years, allocations have been based mainly on previous funding. As funds become obligated through the year, the allocations may occasionally be adjusted with the approval of the Council.

The regional commissions are heavily involved with the planning cycle. In addition, they review and comment on grant applications prior to SPA action; and sometimes provide technical assistance in preparing applications and coordinating projects. But they do not have a formal role in grants management or project monitoring.

2. *Grant Review Process.* Project applications from local jurisdictions are transmitted by the regional commissions, while applications from state agencies are submitted directly to the SPA. The SPA planning staff reviews the applications and suggests modifications. Applicants nearly always follow the suggestions of the SPA staff. If acceptable, modification will go to the Council with a staff recommendation for denial; the Council will sometimes approve such projects if funds are available in the appropriate category. Once the funds for a category have been obligated, the staff can refuse to accept more applications in that category. However, as mentioned above, the staff and SPA may reconsider the allocation to a category. In addition, previously obligated funds that the staff determines will not be used as planned must be reobligated to other projects.

Operating projects applying for refunding have rarely been turned down, but the Council may place conditions on the project along with the continuation funding, particularly when monitoring or evaluation has indicated the need for them.

Two years ago, the SPA staff was given administrative authority to approve grant applications for $5,000 or less.

B. Development and Current Operation of the Evaluation System

1. *The hit program*. The Virginia SPA was one of the first in the country to develop a program of crime-specific planning. The HIT (High Incidence Target) program consists of a number of projects adopted by local jurisdictions and aimed at specific crimes they have selected.

The SPA developed the outline for the program in 1972 after studying the nation's only existing crime-specific state program (in California) and consulting with LEAA specialists. The SPA designated certain localities to be eligible for participation, based on population and crime rate. The program called for those jurisdictions to submit proposals for innovative projects attacking one or more crimes. Each locality had to agree to a few special conditions, such as adopting specific measurable objectives and providing the required match entirely in cash. Grants were for 12 to 18 months, with an implied commitment for refunding, although the locality would need to apply for refunding and demonstrate some success during the first grant period. Program funds were distributed to the localities according to a formula based on crime level, population, and population density. The resulting grants were $220,000 to $350,000 apiece.

The first three localities (constituting "Phase I" of the program) were selected in the fall of 1972, and eight more (Phase II) were selected in the summer of 1973. Although the SPA had not predetermined the target crime, all localities selected burglary. (A few selected robbery as well.)

During the first part of the program's existence, the SPA planning administrator was responsible for HIT, with the assistance of a police program specialist. He issued a request for proposals (RFP) for evaluation of Phase I of the HIT program. The RFP spelled out only the general outlines of what was wanted from the evaluation, and the contractor selected was responsible for both designing and executing the evaluation. In addition to determining how well the projects were meeting their objectives, the contractor attempted to perform interrupted time series analyses to determine the change in crime rates actually caused by the HIT project.[1] These analyses turned out to be only partially successful, because (1) some local crime data were of poor quality, (2) too little time had passed after project initiation to compute trends, and (3) in at least one locality, projects other than the HIT project were initiated about the same time.

When the state Council considered the refunding applications for the Phase I projects in September of 1974, the contractor orally presented findings to the Council. These presentations generated a great deal of interest and discussion among the Council members and had a significant effect on the refunding conditions placed on the projects.

When Phase II of the HIT program was initiated in the summer of 1973, there was a new competition for the evaluation component, and a different contractor was selected. The evaluation design developed by the contractor for the Phase II evaluation was broader in scope than the Phase I design, and methods adopted were better suited to existing data. In addition, the Phase II evaluation contract included monthly reports from the contractor to the SPA staff and to the local project directors.[2] Thus, activity under this contract included monitoring as well as intensive evaluation.

The SPA evaluation unit and the current HIT program coordinator[3] share responsibility for monitoring the evaluation effort. A few months after the second contractor began, they determined that it was unweildy to use two different contractors. Comparable results were not being obtained, and coordination of the two efforts proved to be difficult.[4] Consequently, as the Phase I projects entered their second grant period, this evaluation was assigned to the contractor performing the Phase II evaluation. Having two different contractors work on evaluation had enabled the SPA staff to determine which evaluation design features they preferred and what sort of reporting procedures were more useful. But as useful as this comparison was, the SPA concluded that it would be more efficient to have a single evaluation contractor for the entire program.

2. *The "evaluation system."* Projects which

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[1] The trends in the crime rates for some time before the project started were to be compared with the trends after the project was in operation to see if a significant change occurred.

[2] The Phase I contractor was required to report quarterly rather than monthly.

[3] In 1974, the police program specialist who had been assisting took over as the HIT program coordinator, and the planning administrator assumed a secondary role.

[4] The two contractors normally are competitors.

are not part of HIT or other special programs are covered by the Virginia SPA's "evaluation system." This system was designed by an outside contractor, beginning in March of 1971. The basic concept was that outside "evaluators" would visit project sites, perform extensive semi-structured interviews and prepare summary reports. The reports were sent to the SPA's grants administrator, who made them available to SPA staff and Council members.

After two years of operating the system as originally designed, SPA staff members felt three major problems needed to be solved. First, the evaluations tended to be performed too late in the life of a project to affect any decisions; projects generally were not evaluated until after receipt of their final financial report. Secondly, the quality of the reports was undependable. Thirdly, the reports were not used by most members of the SPA staff or the Council.

To solve these problems, new procedures were adopted in the spring of 1974. The SPA evaluation unit has sent a memorandum to all SPA program coordinators asking them to nominate projects for evaluation. Projects can be nominated at any time. Nominated projects frequently are those due for refunding decisions, since SPA procedures require either a monitoring visit (by the staff program coordinator) or an "evaluation" before refunding.[5] The contractor who operates the evaluation system is then requested to obtain an evaluator. The evaluation unit may reject the person proposed. In fact, as the SPA staff gains experience with different evaluators, the evaluation unit tends to ask for specific individuals in whom it has confidence for a particular type of project.

Before making the site visit, the evaluator will meet with staff analysts to discuss questions which the analysts feel are especially important. Then, immediately upon returning from the site visit, the evaluator presents his findings orally to revelant staff members and promptly writes a report, including a summary of his findings. The report is sent to the subgrantee, who is invited to respond. The summary report and any response are given to all Council members when the project's application for refunding is considered, and also to the appropriate regional planner.

It is too soon since the new procedures were adopted to tell how frequently each project will be evaluated and what percentage of the SPA's 800 projects can be evaluated each year.

3. *Lessons from the Virginia evaluation experiences.* The first evaluation contract for Phase I of the HIT program turned out to have a number of weaknesses. The evaluation design did not cover several factors later needed by the SPA staff. The design erroneously assumed that certain data would be available and that local conditions would be sufficiently uniform. Quarterly reporting by the contractor proved to be too infrequent for the SPA staff to keep close contact with activities in the projects and with the progress of evaluation. The principal value of the effort came when the projects were considered for refunding and contractor personnel shared their observations in person with the Council.

These problems do not represent a failure by the contractor to fulfill the contract, but instead were weaknesses in the evaluation design. Because this was the SPA's first experience with such an intensive evaluation, and because it did not have in-house expertise in evaluation design, it relied to a large extent upon the competitive proposal process to develop the design. The proposers did not have the experience to know what items should be considered in the evaluation, what the local conditions were, and what reporting procedures would be needed, and so even the best proposal proved inadequate. Later competitive offers for the Phase II evaluation, coupled with the SPA experiences in the first evaluation effort, enabled the SPA to know better what it really needed. At the same time is discovered that coordinating separate evaluation efforts by two different contractors is very difficult. Based on the HIT experience, the SPA will be able to specify evaluation needs more precisely in future RFP's. The SPA has learned that close monitoring of both the projects and the evaluation effort is necessary for a major program and that detailed reports on each project are needed at least once a month.

The experiences with the "evaluation system" of consultant reports also offer some lessons. As previously indicated, the state plan in Virginia usually presents general program strategies; final funding decisions are essentially made on a project-by-project basis in response to specific applications. Because of the lack of comparability, evaluation of completed projects—even those within the same program category—did not provide much help in deciding whether to fund new projects. When the

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[5] These procedures were developed before the proposed LEAA guidelines on monitoring were issued in July of 1974.

"evaluation system" was restructured so that the consultants' assessments were tied directly to the refunding cycle, they became relevant to the SPA decision processes.

As has happened in other states, Virginia discovered the need for the SPA to exert quality control over evaluation activities. In particular, the "evaluation system" depends heavily upon the opinions and skills of the consultants, and therefore an essential ingredient of success is the confidence decision makers have in the person selected. There consequently has been a tendency to rely increasingly on a few individuals who work closely with certain SPA staff members. If this system continues, the consultants may tend to lose their status as outside experts and become almost an extension of the SPA staff. (The other state, mentioned in this appendix which uses a list of potential evaluators, Pennsylvania, has not found this to be a problem; but the procedures there are somewhat different in that the consultants work with the Regional Planning Units and subgrantees, not the SPA staff.)

A final lesson from the Virginia experiences concerns procedures for ensuring use of evaluation findings. No matter what their quality or timeliness, evaluation reports are not useful unless they are read by decision makers. Virginia found that making reports readily available was not enough. Involving the primary users of evaluation formation in planning the evaluation activities and reporting the results to the same users as quickly and directly as possible has overcome this obstacle.

V. EVALUATION IN STATES WITH SMALL SIZED GRANTS

When discussing evaluation with representatives of small states, several problems are mentioned repeatedly. These problems are not all unique to small states, but often seem to be especially troublesome to them. This section considers some of the problems, and presents the experiences of two states that have attempted to overcome these problems and are moving toward conducting intensive evaluations.

A. Problems

Seven problems frequently mentioned in discussion with states having smaller grants are:

(1) Financial—The planning grant they receive is so small that, even if evaluation receives a portion of the funds equivalent to that given in larger states, it is still not enough to support even one staff member who can devote most of his time to evaluation. Often, therefore, no one picks up the responsibility.

(2) Legislative disinterest—The state legislature or local units of government often are not especially interested in evaluation. Consequently, they frequently will not approve the matching funds needed if the SPA is to award itself an action grant for evaluation.

(3) Qualified staff—Although the SPA staff might like to evaluate some projects or programs, familiarity with evaluation is limited and the learning process is slow.

(4) Size of projects—Most projects are so small that any evaluation effort would cost too much relative to the cost of the project. Most smaller states do not fund proportionally fewer projects than the larger ones, but instead fund many small projects. For example, in 1972 at least 2 of the 12 largest SPAs funded fewer than 200 projects, while in the same year 2 of the 12 smallest SPAs funded more than 400 projects.

(5) Availability of qualified evaluators—Even when they have money for evaluation many small states complain that there is no one in the state to conduct evaluations, and they seldom have sufficient money to cover travel costs for out-of-state consultants or contractors.

(6) Record keeping—Many states do not have uniform record systems and, in fact, many small communities keep practically no records. All states have this problem, but it appears to be more severe in the small states.

(7) Availability of comparison projects—A state with very few large cities may have no more than one project of any type. Thus, comparative analysis becomes difficult.

B. Examples of Evaluation in Small States

Many states have adopted various strategies for dealing with the problems. Though some states frequently decide simply not to perform intensive evaluations, others have been able to do so—such as Utah and North Dakota. In neither state would all evaluations be called intensive, but in both the procedures allow for intensive evaluations to evolve.

1. *Utah.* The Utah Law Enforcement Planning Agency's action grant for 1974 was $2.7 million, which funded 168 projects. In the past, evaluations have been done by consultants, but neither the SPA staff nor project personnel found them useful. In some cases, the reports were part of a thesis produced by students working for the consultant or by a consultant working for an advanced degree.

The SPA requested the state legislature to provide matching funds for an action grant to itself, but the request was denied. Currently, the SPA is attempting to conduct evaluations on an in-house basis using a single evaluator/planner.

(a) *Scope of effort.* The evaluator initially intended to examine all projects receiving grants of over $10,000, of which there were more than 70 in 1974. The evaluator uses three other criteria for picking projects: he reviews monitoring reports, asks state and regional planners which projects they would like evaluated, and schedules projects during their fourth quarter of funding. About 50 projects will likely be covered in a year.

(b) *Evaluation procedures.* The process begins when the evaluator reviews each subgrant application and recommends changes in goals or objectives or measures to be taken. He may ask project directors to keep certain records.

Projects to be evaluated are then selected and a plan is developed for conducting the evaluation. Before collecting data, the evaluator reviews the SPA project file, talks with the SPA monitor, and asks the state and regional planners if they have specific questions about the projects. Usually they want to know if the project is running well and if it is meeting its objectives, but otherwise they leave decisions on what to look for up to the evaluator. He feels this approach is working because informal feedback from the planners has been positive. He attributes his success in part to the fact that the agency staff, including the director, see a need for evaluation and use information that he has developed.

After a format for collecting and analyzing information has been prepared, the evaluator interviews the project director and reviews data previously collected. The evaluator may collect additional data himself. The state's comprehensive data center also provides data or manpower to collect it. The evaluator tries to verify some of the data and compares all of it to the project's original goals and objectives. The evaluation reports ultimately produced are based on the evaluator's analysis of how well the project's performance met objectives, how the project could be improved, and whether it should be refunded with modifications.

(c) *Use of evaluation results.* The review and analysis committee of the Utah Law Enforcement Planning Council (to which the agency is staff) meets every six weeks to review all requests for projects over $20,000. The committee members are given copies of all evaluation reports. In some instances the modifications suggested in the evaluator's report have been made in the few weeks between the evaluator's preliminary briefing to the project director and the SPA review of the refunding application.

Copies of selected evaluation reports are sent to potential subgrantees interested in designing a project similar to one already funded. All evaluations are publicized in the agency newsletter.

To date, evaluations in Utah have been primarily on an individual project basis. The evaluator is presently reviewing evaluations by program area and relating progress to agency goals and objectives. He expects this review to result in recommendations that special conditions be placed on funded projects in selected program areas.

Given the limited staff and resources available for evaluation in Utah and the resulting dependence on pre-existing or readily collected data, the studies conducted are rarely intensive evaluations. The evaluation reports, however, do point out causal relationships that can be validly inferred and occasionally suggest what more could have been obtained with better foresight.

2. *North Dakota.* In 1974 the North Dakota Combined Law Enforcement Councils' action grant was $1.6 million and it funded approximately 250 projects during the year. In North Dakota, evaluation is viewed as positive and useful by the Council staff, the state legislature, local political subdivisions and subgrantees. The Council staff recognized the need for evaluation when they realized that their monitoring system wasn't providing all the information they needed. However, a special evaluation unit has not been established.

a. *Evaluation procedures.* Currently three types of evaluation are conducted:

- *Self-evaluation by the subgrantee.*

  All requests for refunding are reviewed by an evaluation subcommittee consisting of five members of the Council's staff. The project director is expected to provide the committee with information and data on past progress, impact on crime, strengths, weaknesses, and how the new grant will build on the old one. If a project director raises a problem the committee may ask for data to back up his statement. The committee counsels the project director, suggesting ways of tackling problems. Finally, the committee votes on whether to recommend the project for refunding.
- *In-house evaluation.*

  On their grant application, potential subgrantees are asked to specify what indicators of success and failure can be used to evaluate their proposed project. On selected projects, the SPA collects and analyzes data relative to the indicators.

  If the state will provide matching funds, the SPA intends to use Part C funds to hire two evaluation specialists: a chief evaluator who will design an evaluation module and evaluation instruments and a statistician; then most evaluation will be conducted in-house. In the meantime, most independent evaluations are handled through consultants.

- *Consultant Evaluations.*

  If an evaluation consultant is to be hired, the subgrantee is requested to include in his application a request for an additional $2,500 or $3,000 to fund the evaluation. To date, obtaining state or local matching funds for consultant evaluations has not been a problem. When several similar projects are to be evaluated, the funds are added to only one application, but the consultant includes several projects in his evaluation. The subgrantee and the Council jointly prepare an RFP for the evaluation and distribute it throughout the state. Since there are two universities, several colleges, and many professionals in the state, finding a good evaluator has never been a problem.

An evaluation related problem that the SPA faces is the quality and quantity of records kept throughout the state. All projects are asked to keep some records to measure progress toward achieving objectives, but there is little uniformity to criminal statistics in the state.

b. *Evaluation Uses.* Evaluations are expected to determine if projects are meeting a need, are doing the job they are supposed to do, can do more than they are doing, and if so, how they can be developed further. The results are used for refunding decisions by the Council and funding decisions by local political subdivisions when considering whether to continue a project the Council had been funding.

In summary, the North Dakota SPA has established an environment that encourages intensive evaluation and has initiated several efforts in that direction. Their approach produces at least some evaluative information on all projects and allows more attention on selected ones.

VI. EXAMPLES OF DATA SYSTEMS USED FOR EVALUATION PURPOSES

A number of SPAs have developed uniform data systems that can be used for evaluation purposes. The trend can be attributed to a variety of reasons. In some cases, there simply is no data base to tap; for example, sheriffs frequently take their files with them at the end of their term. Some SPAs have wanted data on similar projects in order to make comparative analyses. Others have developed systems to feed directly into their monitoring and evaluation activities.

To date, few SPAs have gained much experience with uniform data collection and none has a fully developed system. For this reason, no system is described here in detail. The discussion is aimed at indicating what is involved in collecting data and general directions being followed.[1]

A. South Carolina SPA System

South Carolina's system has been operational for less than a year. Minimum data requirements are defined yearly as part of what is called Project Criteria, which specifies characteristics projects should have before the SPA will accept applications for funding. Variables are given which must be used in the measurable objective statement in the application. It is up to the subgrantee to specify what data sources will be used (public, implementing agency or project) and what measurements will be taken to verify accomplishments. If the project criteria list internal evaluation as a requirement, then the applicant must specify proposed activities and project quarterly accomplishment for each. The SPA evaluation staff is able to maintain quality control through its review of applications and its authority to return an application or negotiate deficiencies with the applicant.

Although South Carolina's system is not as comprehensive as other SPAs (usually specifying eight or fewer variables per project) it is an attempt to have common data elements with which to compare projects.

B. Connecticut SPA System

Connecticut's Continuous Evaluation Data Collection System provides data both for anticipated in-depth evaluations and for monitoring existing projects. Measures are prespecified covering background information, input and output items, and project effectiveness. Additional data elements for each of the four categories are assigned by the Evaluation Unit to each project and are designed specifically for its objectives and activities.

The SPA exerts control over the system by specifying the measures to be used. This increases the opportunity for standardization of data across projects, although there is a commitment to individualized measures.

C. Ohio SPA System

Ohio's data collection system utilizes a modular approach for the assignment of a "Monitoring/Evaluation Package" to each project. The package is a combination of "modules" (sets of questions) addressing the project's major concerns. Although the modular system has the potential of using 100 modules of up to 26 questions each, only 32 modules are presently needed.

The quarterly reports generated by this modular system are a combination of a numerical matrix (which is then stored in Management Information System) and a brief narrative about the project's progress during the quarter. Ohio's modular approach is a compromise between a finite set of forms and a unique report for each project. This compromise is intended to measure each project's progress in meeting the goals stated in its application, as well as being able to measure the progress of projects concerned with similar criminal justice problems. Ohio's system is more standardized than either South Carolina's or Connecticut's, in the sense that subgrantees are required to report standard data items.

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[1] More detailed examples of data collection systems, including sample data collection forms are given in the Appendix of *Monitoring for Criminal Justice Planning Agencies*, U.S. Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, August 1, 1974.

D. Other Data Systems

As noted above, several SPAs have developed comprehensive data collection systems for all funded projects or a selected set of projects. The Minnesota Minimum Data Requirements, described in Section A of this appendix, is an example of a system designed to cover a set of projects not necessarily included in an intensive evaluation. Michigan also has developed a set of monitoring and evaluation factors used to collect performance information on funded projects.

The Indiana SPA is developing a data collection and analysis system designed to meet its evaluation requirements. In early 1974, proposed data collection instruments were developed and tested on 50 projects. The resulting data proved to be inadequate for the proposed analysis and further development work was required.

Many states develop a data collection system for selected programs operated by the SPA or as part of an intensive evaluation effort. However, they tend to serve special purposes and to be discontinued when the project or program is completed.

E. Problems

Although called "Evaluation Systems," these data systems provide only a basis for monitoring and evaluation. Many states have experienced problems in trying to operate such a system and have chosen to abandon it.

In some cases the system does not require the subgrantee to provide baseline data so that before-after analyses are not possible. The limitation of the systems for intensive evaluation purposes is that data are collected only on operating projects; the rest of the criminal justice system goes unchecked and unmonitored. Most SPA staffs agree that a data system cannot compensate for the information inadequacies of the criminal justice system; it can only allow them to work with it and around it, using the best data available to them.

One problem with SPA-specified data systems is that all similar projects are frequently given the same goal and objectives and judged by the same measures. It may be unfair and meaningless to compare a half-way house that provides psychological and job counseling services with one that is merely custodial. Yet, using measures unique to individual projects would negate the goal of a standardized system.

Interpretation of terms has been a problem, even in systems that include detailed definitions such as Ohio's. Staff members cite instances in which inaccurate interpretations have resulted in the wrong information being collected. Of greater consequence is the fact that lost data cannot be recaptured. Such mistakes are often not detected until after the first reporting period, especially if the system doesn't include procedures to validate the information as it is being collected.

Although many states have developed or are developing data systems, there is no basis upon which to make a recommendation concerning them. All of the systems discussed above have been operating for less than a year or are still being planned. A data system needs time to be implemented, operated, validated and utilized.

APPENDIX B

The National Evaluation Program

THE NATIONAL EVALUATION PROGRAM[1]

The LEAA Evaluation Policy Task Force recommended that certain types of information can best be produced through nationally coordinated evaluations. This is especially true of information that indicates whether a particular idea for reducing crime or a particular approach for improving criminal justice is likely to be successful under a variety of conditions, organizations and management.

State Planning Agencies and local criminal justice system administrators select, direct, and control the projects implemented under the LEAA grant programs. Although certain types of projects are operated with some frequency throughout the country, it is difficult for an SPA or criminal justice system administrator to obtain comparison data, to determine in advance whether a type of project has been generally successful or unsuccessful in other communities, or to find out what effect emphasizing particular components of a project may have on its success or failure. The major reason for this problem has been a lack of comprehensive evaluations that covered similar types of projects and collected similar information about each project.

To produce this type of information, the Office of Research Programs of the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice initiated the National Evaluation Program. Through this program, evaluation information about particular *topic areas* commonly encountered by SPAs and local administrators will be produced. Each topic area will include a group of projects that appear to have similar goals and methods and which are common enough to be of interest to many SPAs and local administrators.

A. Operation of the Program

In each topic area an attempt will be made to assemble what is known about the methods, outcomes, and effectiveness of projects of that general type and to determine if the present knowledge—when assembled—is sufficient to be useful in planning and funding decisions by the SPAs and local agencies. If the present knowledge does not appear sufficient, designs will be developed specifying how such information could be obtained and at what cost. After consultation with a coordinating committee, an effort may be made to obtain missing information. In each topic area examined, there may be as many as three steps: a Phase I investigation, consultation with the evaluation coordinating committee and, in many cases, a Phase II evaluation.

In each topic area examined, the Phase I investigation will cover the collection, synthesis, and assessment of what is already known and one or more designs for evaluations that would fill any gaps in that knowledge. A consultation among NILECJ, LEAA, and SPAs and local administrators will take place once the product of Phase I is in hand. The mechanism for this consultation will be an evaluation coordinating committee composed of representatives from the national office, the regional offices, and the SPAs. This consultation will consider whether present knowledge of project results is adequate and, when it is not, which of the proposed evaluation designs should be implemented. The production of that additional information, when necessary, will constitute the Phase II evaluation. By proceeding in this way, the National Evaluation Program can capitalize on the projects and information already existing and at the same time tailor its outputs to the needs of SPAs and local criminal justice system administrators.

It is expected that some of the Phase I investigations will be adequate in themselves, will demonstrate the infeasibility of future evaluation in that topic area, or will indicate that the cost of obtaining more accurate knowledge is higher than its possible value to LEAA, the SPAs, and the local administrators. In the other cases, however, a Phase

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[1] Taken from "Work Description for a Phase I Study Under the National Evaluation Program" by Richard Barnes of the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice and Joe Nay and Joseph Wholey of The Urban Institute, Washington, D.C., April 30, 1974.

II (an actual field evaluation) will be implemented based upon the design developed during Phase I, or selected portions of that design. A contractor or grantee selected for a Phase I effort will neither be assured of, nor prohibited from, conducting the Phase II evaluation should such an effort be implemented.

B. Phase I Products and Work

To better understand the operation of the program, the remainder of this Appendix describes the work to be performed during a Phase I investigation and the products to be produced. This section summarizes the work required and the relationship of the work to the required products.

1. *Phase I products.* The products required in the Phase I investigation of a particular topic area may be summarized as follows (numbers in parentheses refer to Figure B-1).

- (1) Paper outlining the issues and expert opinions in the topic area drawn from available general knowledge and past findings.
- (2) For projects in the topic area, a process flow diagram of the intervention actually made by the project, and an accompanying description of the project keyed to the flow diagram.
- (3) A framework(s) that represents a synthesis of the assumptions that underlie the projects (or families of projects) in the topic area and can be used to describe the chains of assumptions linking the expenditure of funds to project activity or intervention, the project activity or intervention to immediate outcome, and the immediate outcome to the impact on the problem addressed by the topic area. Included will be potential measurement points, suggested data elements to be measured, and methods of measurement for testing the assumptions. Also included will be a listing of those factors affecting a project that are believed to be under control of the project and those likely intervening factors not under the control of the project.
- (4) A judgmental assessment—in terms of the framework, its operating assumptions, and the specified data elements—of the success or failure in the topic area and a statement of the quality, reliability, and accuracy of this assessment on the basis of present knowledge. This assessment will also point up gaps in present knowledge and the importance (or unimportance) of these gaps in assessing success or failure.

  This must be a publishable summary of the known quantitative results in the topic area. It should include the best data available on both the costs and effectiveness of projects in the topic area.
- (5) An evaluation design based on the framework developed above for filling gaps in present knowledge in order to produce an authoritative and useful assessment of success or failure. This design should estimate the importance, feasibility, methods, and costs of obtaining measurements to further test the assumptions laid out in the framework (where that appears to be necessary).
- (6) A model data collection and evaluation design for use with single projects of the type included in the topic area at the state and local level. This represents an adaptation of the same framework developed in (3) to a single local project.

2. *Relation of the work efforts to the products.* Figure B-1 displays the various portions of the work effort during Phase I and relates this work to the products to be produced. At the left side of the figure are three knowledge gathering activities. These relate to general knowledge in the topic area, past evaluation or research findings in the topic area, and descriptions of interventions at existing projects. The earliest product required is a paper on the topic area (1) combining the two types of available knowledge and further scoping and illustrating issues in the topic area. The first draft of this paper will serve as a discussion point with NILECJ of the approach being taken by the grantee.

Through field work and telephone interviews, the grantee is expected to develop a detailed picture of the interventions being carried out by existing projects. This information—while not expected to be in publishable form—is the second deliverable product (2).

To produce a general basis for evaluation in this topic area, a framework that encompasses the apparent underlying operating assumptions of existing projects and the likely points and methods of measurement is to be created through a synthesis of the knowledge collected. This framework is the third deliverable product (3). It should be adequate in detail to support both the Phase II design for the topic area and the design of a model evaluation for local use by single projects as well.

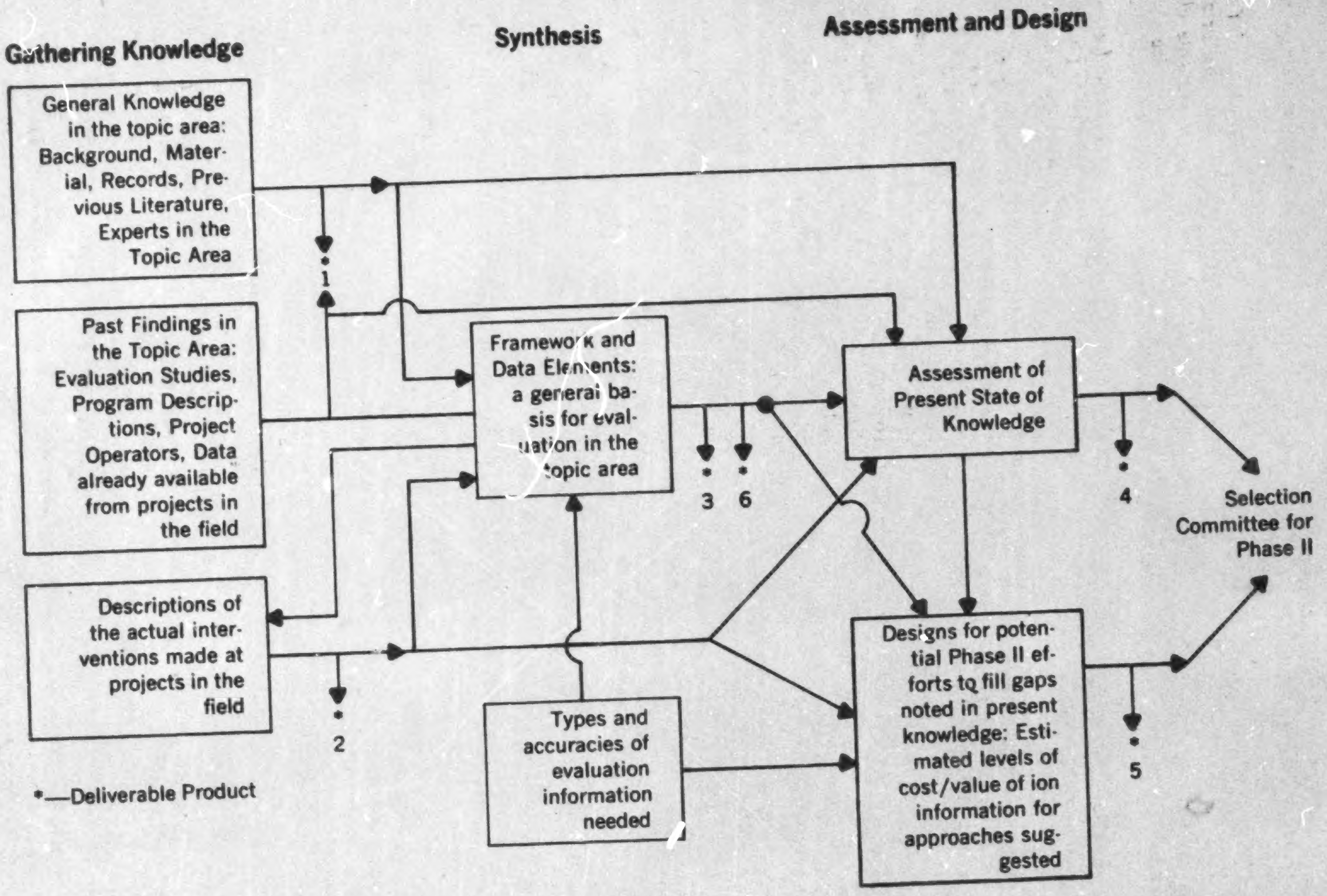
Gathering Knowledge
Synthesis
Assessment and Design
General Knowledge in the topic area: Background, Material, Records, Previous Literature, Experts in the Topic Area
Past Findings in the Topic Area: Evaluation Studies, Program Descriptions, Project Operators, Data already available from projects in the field
Descriptions of the actual interventions made at projects in the field
Framework and Data Elements: a general basis for evaluation in the topic area
Types and accuracies of evaluation information needed
Assessment of Present State of Knowledge
Designs for potential Phase II efforts to fill gaps noted in present knowledge: Estimated levels of cost/value of ion information for approaches suggested
Selection Committee for Phase II
* 1
* 2
* 3
* 6
* 4
* 5
*—Deliverable Product

FIGURE B–1. *Relationship of the Various Phase I Tasks For One Topic Area*

The framework is to be used as a basis for performing and presenting an assessment of the present state of knowledge (4). This assessment, the framework, user needs, and the descriptions of the actual projects in the field are to be used in developing one or more designs for the collection and analysis of any additional evaluation information that is needed nationally (5). This product contains both the technical design and a discussion of the costs and value of implementing various portions of the design.

Since the framework contains a detailed basis for evaluating the type of project considered in the topic area, it is also to be used to produce the model data collection and evaluation design for use with single projects at the local level (6). This product should contain key data elements and the measures and comparisons to be used.

The figure is not meant to imply that the activities necessarily take place sequentially. It is more likely that development of products will in each case be an iterative process of development and improvement over time as more information is produced. For instance, some working framework or model will probably be necessary to assess the field interventions efficiently. But discovery during field work of actual interventions will probably cause the grantee to significantly alter the initial framework used. Similarly, the topic area paper is likely to be revised as field work begins to indicate that particular past findings either appear sound or may be faulty.

The type of work performed in Phase II will be dependent on the evaluation design adopted from the Phase I work.

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